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ESSAYS

ON THE

POLITICAL HISTOR

OF THE

FIFTEENTH, SIXTEENTH, AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES.

BY

JULES VAN PRAET.

EDITED BY SIR EDMUND HEAD, BART.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

In consenting to edit this translation, I can but feel that I have undertaken a task wh ought to have been executed by far abler han The death of Mrs. Austin has deprived us of who united a masculine power of understand with the tact and delicacy peculiar to a wom Had she fulfilled her intention of looking o these pages the reader might have been sure t the meaning of the author was correctly giv and that it was conveyed to him in pure a idiomatic English. No doubt, too, the fact t those who have executed the translation are n and dear to her, would have secured at hands peculiar care in its supervision. To we owe some of the very best translations be found in the English language; and there a few persons whose energies and accomplishme would enable them to edit successfully t

C 2-23-49

Lectures on the Province of Jurisprudenc
translate Ranke's "History of the Popes."
is, I have been requested to do that impc
which she would have done perfectly,
cannot let this volume appear without a
to the memory of one whose friendshi
regard I shall never cease to value.

EDMUND HI

NOTE.—With the exception of the las
pages, the whole of this translation h
revised and corrected by the late Sir
Head.

PREFACE.

WITHOUT having formed the project of execu
such a task, I have long and often thought
work, the object of which should be to show
changes and modifications in the political posi
both internal and external, of the large state
the west of Europe from the close of the fe
period to our own days.

Such a book would have to show the cha
which successively took place in the principles,
form, and conduct of the governments guiding
affairs of those great states ; the increase or decr
in their power ; the character of their ambi
whether just or immoderate ; their influence for g
or for evil over the fate of the people subjec
them ; their relations in peace or war with
another, and the territorial consequences of t
wars. It would be necessary to take into acc
the time when the historical facts occurred,

irresistible movement of human ideas, and th
of the men who held sway; it would be n
too to examine what those men, eminent for
and ability, who from the end of the fou
century chanced to be mixed up in the gove
of nations, said, thought, or wrote in the
with which they had to deal. Such were
III, Van Artevelde, Henry V, Louis XI, C
Amboise, Julius II, Duprat, Charles V, P
Ximenes, William the Silent, Catherine of
Elizabeth, L'Hôpital, Henry IV, Sully, F
II, Gustavus Adolphus, Richelieu, Mazarin
well, Louis XIV, Lionne, De Witt, and

III. We ought to learn how they judged
of society in the midst of which they
compared with that which preceded it,
what degree each had at heart the well
mankind or his own gratification.

Such a book would be the political h
modern times; but that which I now pu
not the beginning or even the sketch of
book. It is at the most what a painter
call the ground on which to work.

It is, perhaps, useless, in the times i
we live, to define what we understand
politics of a country. In a few words, i

its everyday life, in relation to its institutions, to the laws of general interest in force at moment: in short, the relations of all with government, whatever may be its form, and relations of that government with foreign sta When this everyday life, with these laws of gen interest and the institutions of a country are plained, and when these relations of the people their government, and of the government foreign states are discussed, then we in fact w its political history.

The modern history of Western Europe, if look at its general outlines, up to the end of wars of Louis XIV, seems to offer the follow characteristics of certain periods.

First, the Feudal Period.—The territory is s up among the possessors of fiefs, who depend no nally on the crown, but are in reality independ The Anglo-French wars have the true feudal c racter, and turn mainly on the claims of the ro houses engaged in them. They were wars assert certain rights; not wars of conquest; for the ki of England claimed to be the legitimate heirs the crown of France. This period ends with fourteenth century; and these wars gradually laxed their force, though they did not cease

the next century; an epoch which is rather th
of the middle ages than the beginning of n
times.

*Period of the Wars of Families.—Fif
Century.*—The feudal element has been wea
by the action of time, and by the struggles be
the lords themselves. Fiefs have been gra
absorbed into each other, and made larger
royal power has become stronger in Fran
England, and in Spain. Contests are no
carried on between the feudal vassals, but l
the princes of the same family, who are indiv
more powerful, but less numerous. This v
epoch of the war for the "public weal" in
under the Dukes of Burgundy and Charles V
Louis XI, and of the Wars of the Roses in I

Period of the Wars between States.—T
kingdoms now contend either to conquer
from the other certain portions of territo
to obtain domains situated beyond thei
limits. The unity of the state is complet
feudal or family rivalries have been exting
This is the time of the great wars of the si
and seventeenth centuries. France and Sp
fighting for the sovereignty of certain p
Italy. The rivalry between the Houses of

and Spain,—and after a branch of the Spanish hou
had been established on the Imperial throne,—t
rivalry between the Houses of France and of Austr
fill up these two great centuries, from the acc
sion of Charles VIII. to the Treaty of Utrec
(1483—1713). This struggle in the most remar
able manner assumed a personal character in t
first instance as between Charles V. and Francis
it languished during the reign of the last prince
the Valois race and under Philip II.; but it becam
more intense from the time of Philip III. to that
Charles II. of Spain, and under Louis XIII. a
Louis XIV. in France.

The Period of the Wars for Supremacy, wh
sometimes are scarcely to be distinguished fr
those of the preceding period.—In proportion
each state became more powerful, and whenever
was represented by a man of greater strength, t
ambition of its king was to obtain the suprema
of Europe. Such men were Charles V, Richeli
Louis XIV, and William III. All these, and ev
Philip II, sought to possess greater power than a
other European state, and to acquire a moral
fluence greater than all of them put together. T
struggle for European supremacy confounds its
therefore with the struggle between state and stat

it cannot be said to be limited by any fixed
because it depends upon the character an
qualities of certain men.

Revolutionary Periods.—The insurrections a
the crown, by dissatisfied subjects, depend, lil
wars for supremacy, on the character of the
reigns under whose reign they break out.
three great revolutions of modern history,
shook the throne of Philip II. of Spain, and
threw those of Charles I. of England, and
XVI. of France, are separated by intervals
century from each other. They imply an ad
state of society, and an exaggerated condi
the kingly power. The differences of the
racter, violence, and duration depend on th
condition in the midst of which they spri
the greater or less feebleness of the powe
they attack.

The modern history of Western Europe has,
fore, to narrate successively the end of the
system, the family wars, and, at the same
the wars between state and state, the w
nations for supremacy, and the revolutions,
have taken place. It has to tell us, moreove
far religious ideas before the Reformation
sixteenth century, but especially after it, we

nected with the political government of stat
and what portion of aid or of embarrassment,
a manner ever-varying and irregular but full
passion, they brought to each.

Up to the end of the seventeenth century, th
are the great chapters of modern history. But
the midst of its principal features there is one wh
in those powerful states of Western Europe t
played the most important parts, and led the w
in social progress, is most constantly promine
and that is their uninterrupted advance towards
unity of the monarchy. Those who governed th
states had to sway masses of people every
becoming larger, and territories every day becom
wider. Of the five great principal sovereignties
groups of sovereignties, which, if we except so
secondary states, geographically make up West
Europe—that is to say, England, France, Sp
Germany, and Italy—the three first were c
stituted, in a manner more or less open to questi
on the basis of monarchical unity. The two oth
Germany and Italy, followed a different cou
They remained broken up,—Germany into
narchical states for the most part of secondary
portance, Italy into small principalities, more
less independent, and into republics. Burgundy

it had continued to exist as a powerful and pendent state, such as it was under the Dukes House of Valois, would have formed a sixth kingdom ; but, after one century of such a lif fifteenth), it disappeared from the map of Eu

Thus, as historically there are five great gories of facts, which are present in success the modern history of Western Europe, so g phically, and putting aside some secondary which will be mentioned, there are five gre principal divisions of territory.

If we consider how these five great kin or these groups of kingdoms, are place reference to each other on the European sce recognise among them the following condi things :—

When the Anglo-French wars had ceas the fifteenth century—when the three grea archies of Spain, France, and England ha secured its independence at home, and was established—when the wars between Franc Spain had commenced—France and Spain the first part as combatants ; generally, at firs a marked superiority on the side of Spain. these wars, England—that is to say, the E of Henry VIII, of Elizabeth, and even lat

England of the Stuarts—kept a little in the ba
ground of the two principal powers. She interfe
indeed in the affairs of the continent with
material force and her moral authority, but
remained in the second rank; she consulted
own security, leant by preference towards that
of the rivals who was the weaker, and occasion
proposed herself as mediator between the two.
a later period England was destined to occupy
first rank. During this great war between Fra
and Spain, the two remaining powers—I
and Germany—which with France, Spain,
England, completed the five great states of Eu
—were made up, as they have since continued
be, of groups of states, separated one from the ot
and divided in their wishes and interests, with
any force of unity or cohesion. They were
advanced, if we may so speak, in their polit
career, and stood in the sixteenth and seventee
centuries at a point in politics which Fra
Spain, and England had attained one hundred
fifty years before. Now and then they showe
tendency to unite under the influence of an a
tious or a powerful man, like Julius II, Charles V
Ferdinand II.; but they could not accomplish t
end, and they thus continued to act a second

part to that played by France, Spain, or Eng
They served however as a mark for the aml
of the powers of the first rank, each of w
wished, at one and the same time, to exercise a
dominant influence over them. Charles V.
Francis I, Charles V. and Henry II, afterv
Henry IV. and Richelieu, Philip III. and Phili
and Ferdinand II, all sought successively, i
great wars of Italy, in the wars of Germany a
Lorraine, in the Thirty Years' War, in that c
Valtelline and of Mantua, not exactly the ma
but the preponderance in Italy and in Ger
Italy precedes Germany, in the order of time,
theatre and object of this struggle; and,
Spain had established her superiority ove
French arms in Italy, so as to leave for Fra
the seventeenth century nothing more there t
except some petty conquests, then Germany, i
turn, became the field and the subject of conte
Thus, during the wars between Spain and Fra
and between Austria and France, Italy and
many, which lay beyond their limits, were cov
if not as affording territory to be conquered, at
in the character of a field for the exercise of sup
influence by one of the combatants. Throug
these two centuries of conflict, Italy and Gerr

figured only in the third rank, behind Fra
Spain, and England. It was not their destiny
those times, which are now so remote from us,
follow the course pursued by the other great pow
in their progress towards unity.

Still further in the rear of this third rank, th
other states of less importance fill up the geog
phical outline of Western Europe. Two of th
from their position, their character, and th
history, became independent early in their car
while the destiny of the third was special a
remarkable. I allude, of course, to Switzerla
Venice, and the Low Countries. The two f
were powerful and warlike republics, but Ven
though Italian, did not always share the destin
of Italy, nor Switzerland those of Germa
although it spoke that language.

The Low Countries remain, and we will speak
them presently, but we will first succinctly sum
that which we have just been attempting to descri

Spain, France, England, Italy, and Germany
five great states, or groups of states—Ven
Switzerland, and the Low Countries,—three sta
of secondary importance—compose the map
Western Europe. After the cessation of the w
between France and England, first Spain a

France, and then Austria and France, pl
principal part in war against each other. E
at this epoch figures only in the second l
the ally of one or the other of the two great
or the mediator between them. The
England, however, is destined one day to
more important than that of France or
Italy and Germany, which complete the
of the five great states, occupy the thir
in the scene. France and Spain, and lat
France and Austria, fight to obtain prepon
first in Italy, and subsequently in Germany.
contend for the possession of Italy, freque
Italy itself; and they contend for Ge
frequently in Germany itself.

Such is the position of affairs presented
and such, with successive variations of ti
place, is the most general view put before us
map of Western Europe since the feudal wars
portion of the Continent, then, in the transitio
feudal times to our own, has passed throu
wars of families, the wars between States, the
European wars, the Reformation, and the re
affecting the form of government. We have
said that, when wars became of a general ch
and were conducted by men of great amb

of great genius, they ceased to have some fi
conquest as their object, but aimed rather
obtaining supremacy in Europe—a supremacy wh
passed from one to the other of the great power
from Spain to France or from France to Englan
as the capricious chances of a battle, or the succ
which fortune gave to the genius of some politici
might alternately decide. Such was the suprem
which belonged to Spain under Charles V,
even after him under Philip II.; to France un
Henry IV, and Richelieu, and during the ea
days of Louis XIV.; to England in the old
of Louis XIV, and under William III.

I have now something to say of the L
Countries, and of their position in Europe.

The provinces which once formed the circle
Burgundy have almost always played a m
important part in the affairs of Europe than
amount of their population would seem to warr
If it was a matter of discussion for ages to wh
the superior influence in Italy and in Germ
should belong, it was equally a matter of imp
tance to know whether the Low Countries sho
enter or remain in the orbit of Spain, Fra
England, or Germany. The southern provinces
the Netherlands, during the middle ages, w

very powerful by their arms, their wealth municipal liberty, and their industry. Befc during the government of the Dukes of Bur these provinces were by turns French or in the sentiments which they manifested, or in the tendencies of those who governed They were French during the wars of the gnacs, and were engaged in the troubles of against that faction; they were English w Treaty of Troyes was signed. They were because the Dukes of Burgundy were the of France; they were English, and the England, by accident, and because a s vengeance animated Philip the Good France, or because Charles the Bold profes intend the invasion of that country wit assistance of England. This alliance was fa being, as it might have been, the result serious combination. In the succeeding Charles V. found the Low Countries as i on the rent-roll of his inheritance, and Fra did not take them from him: in fact he seriously made the attempt.

Charles V. was too powerful, and duri greater part of his career too successful, t any one gravely to dispute his possession

Netherlands. They rendered him the gre
service, for they provided him abundantly
money, and, if we except the revolt of Ghent,
caused him little anxiety. To the people of G
the Emperor was cold and severe, but he mad
for it by entrusting the government of the cou
to two women of high character and of
capacity, Margaret of Parma and Mary of Hun
He showed so much affection and confidenc
his Flemish subjects, as frequently to rouse
jealousy of the Spaniards. Under Philip II, du
the religious wars, the southern provinces had
wish but not the power to throw off the Spa
yoke. They were at length convinced that
could not free themselves from Spain wit
foreign aid. They might have offered themse
to France, if the sovereign of that country,
being able to make up his mind to defend t
had had energy enough to incorporate them. T
would have given themselves to England, as
provinces of the north wished to do, had E
beth consented to take them; and had not
seen, in the bitter resentment of Spain deprive
her possessions, and in the jealousy of Franc
double chance of war, which shocked her prude
and alarmed her parsimony.

The northern provinces, lost to Philip II, f
and maintained their independence ; so that I
became, after the sixteenth century, as forı
as any state in Europe by its maritime pov
the boldness of its commercial enterprise.

The southern portion, however, remained
to Spain ; and Philip II, regretting in his
that he had passed all his life away from t
Countries, gave what he yet possessed of
his daughter, without renouncing his claim
definitively, and without recognising th
pendence of those which had freed them
the north. After the death of Isabell
still retained possession of this rich doma
Henry IV. once thought of taking it fro
and bestowing it on the United Provinces
conceived, but not executed). Richelieu a
for a moment the project, which he did not
of dividing the spoil between France and H
and Louis XIV. imprudently attempted t
quest, without thinking that he was ruining
and that he had to deal with the arı
Europe, the navy of England, and the b
patient spirit of William III. The south
vinces of the Low Countries, then—let
them for shortness, Belgium—remained Sp

spite of the greed of France, and in spite of
fact that they were ill-defended by Spain.
it was that Belgium, during the whole cours
the struggle between France and Spain, from
rupture of the Treaty of Noyon (1519), until
conclusion of the Peace of Utrecht (1713), c
nued throughout that great war to have
importance disproportioned to its population
military force, as one of the fields of battle,
as one of the great stakes which were played fo

This importance resulted from its central
tion on the map of Europe, from its wealth
contiguity to France, to Germany and to the se
situation on two great rivers, the considerable
crease of power it brought or threatened to b
to any one of the great states which might po
it or covet it; and from the difficulty of foundi
balance of power in Europe likely to last, when t
provinces were in the hands of one of the g
States, or of one of those deeply engaged
general war. The Treaty of Utrecht caused t
provinces to pass from the hands of the e
branch of the Spanish house to those of the youn
which had been established on the Imperial th
since the abdication of Charles V.

The Low Countries—the birthplace of Philip

Good, of Mary of Hungary, of the family of
of Adrian VI, of four or five generations
House of Nassau, of Egmont, of Barnev
Tilly, of Tromp, of De Witt, and of Heinsiu
more especially the provinces of the sou
country where the Dukes of Burgundy lived
Charles V. was born, where the Duke c
combated the Revolution and the Refor
where Maurice of Nassau fought against
William III. against Louis XIV.—where s
blood has been shed, from the time of th
of Bouvines down to our own day—this
has her place in the annals of Europe,
assigned to her a definite and important s
action of her own.

It would be curious to examine the d
military or diplomatic events, for the sake o
how far Belgium was mixed up in the a
Europe from the time of the death of Edwa
to the Peace of Utrecht, that is, from the tim
she made a commercial alliance with Engl
that day when, after having been less than o
dred years governed by the Dukes of Bur
and for two hundred years by the Kings of
the country passed under the dominion of the
of Austria. It would be interesting, by

questioning the sovereigns of Europe, and the
of their respective governments, to ascertain in
manner, why, in what circumstances, and in
great a degree, the uncertain fate of Belgium
volves or menaces the true, necessary and la
conditions of the balance of power in Europe.

When we follow the steps of French po
from the time of the English wars to the
of the seventeenth century—from the accessio
Charles VIII. to the death of Louis XIV,
easy to distinguish three leading ideas. First,
was that of the war with Spain, represented
Charles VIII, Louis XII, and Francis I.; then
of the alliance of France with the foreign Refor
with a view to the same contest, and this alli
was represented by Henry IV. and Richel
lastly, there was that most ill-judged war ag
Austria and against all Europe united, wh
Protestant or Catholic, at once the dream and
ruin of Louis XIV.

All these wars, all the treaties which termin
them, the dynastic revolutions of the Low Coun
and of England, and the civil wars in France
in Germany, affected the fate of the Belgian
vinces, by increasing or diminishing in some
their security or prosperity.

They never could be indifferent to the g
course of these European events, nor unaffec
their results. Looking thus to the destir
Europe as a whole, and to the course of
during three centuries, such, in a few words,
place, and such the influence which belongs
Low Countries, and particularly to the l
provinces. We cannot rank them among th
states of Europe; but we can say, that they
been a party in all the great suits, and that d
their temporary connexion with Burgundy
Franche-Comté, while France and England
wasting their strength in the convulsions of
war, they occupied one of the first places.

This general picture, presented so briefly
be repeated in a still more incomplete man
the five sketches which form this volume. M
allowance for the encroachment which we
remarked, of one epoch upon another, when
powerful genius hastens the course of events
sketches correspond to the five sets of historic
which we have enumerated. They are indis
connected by the chain of occurrences t
three centuries, and they are intended spec
illustrate the principle, whether it were las
transitory, generous or selfish, which animat

guided each government. This is a peculiar aspe
of history which may be studied lovingly and ca
fully, without neglecting its general tenor, or t
other portions of the great drama which it presen
The government, whatever was its form, its exc
lences, or its defects, whatever was the principle
the passion that guided it—we are speaking
governments of former times—affected all the
terests, and involved the whole fate of the peo
with whom it was concerned.

In making an especial study of the conduct
governments, we are bound to observe what chan
have been made in their principle, and in the l
of their existence, as well as what passed in
mind of those who administered them. There
no country, for example, which, in the progress
its domestic policy, presents a field of observati
so varied as England, inasmuch as the system v
feudal under the descendants of the Norman c
querors, and advanced gradually towards a par
mentary form, as the influence of the Great Char
was developed; at a later period the country v
governed despotically, after the fashion of c
tinental states, by craft under the Tudors, and w
blind rashness under the Stuarts. The governm
was republican for a moment as an experiment, l

it was only again to become and to remai
mentary, after its second revolution; an
form, thus definitively adopted, England h
nued to grow in power and influence. The
therefore, of the constitutional govern
England has the merit of exhibiting
spectator, in its successive conditions, ea
retical principle and its practical applic
politics, as it likewise shows in the person
rulers—from the reign of Henry V. in the
century to that of Queen Anne in the eigh
all the varieties of intellect and passion w
to be found in a human being invested wit
and authority, and thus subjected to a d
trial.

It would require much more time thar
devoted to this work—and the subject w
quire to be more completely worked ou
wished to place before the eye of the
complete picture of European politics du
period which separates us from the middle
order to set forth the ideas of those wh
the course of those great centuries, star
mark of their own will on the politics and
of their day, we ought, for instance, to en
more deeply into the disagreements of t

of Burgundy and of Charles V. with their peop
and their states, into the minute history of t
religious sects in Holland and in France,—into t
details of the events of the Thirty Years' W
and of the policy which prevailed in Holland duri
the interregnum subsequent to the death of t
Stadtholder William II, before the military ent
prises of Louis XIV. We cannot understand t
true bearing of great events unless we study th
in their particular incidents, just as we never kn
the character of a man unless we follow him in t
details of his daily life.

Against my wish and my tastes, this book
then only a summary, and it may be that
certain events and on certain men its views dif
somewhat from those which are generally receive

I have made use of the great works in whi
documents hitherto unpublished have now appear
and which allow us, with reference to the fifteen
and sixteenth centuries, to the wars of Charles V
the personal labours of Charles V, to Cardi
Granvelle, Philip II, the members of the Hou
of Nassau, and Cardinal Richelieu, to know th
which was hidden from the generation before us.[1]

[1] The Correspondence of Charles V. by Dr. Lanz; the Papers
Cardinal Granvelle, collected by M. Weiss; the Correspondence
Philip II. and of the Prince of Orange, published by M. Gachard;

Having already passed more than thirty
the absorbing pursuits of public life, without
enjoyed what can be properly called the
necessary for study, I have written the five
which form this volume at considerable in
They were frequently composed with a haste
of which the reader will not fail to see, a
the hesitation of one who never had the
exercise himself in the art of writing histo
execute the grand work, to which this wou
merely as the introduction, must require
for the task and an amount of diligence
than any one can hope to possess who has
for the larger portion of his life a str
literary labour.

It is possible that, in observing the
of governments, an involuntary preference,
and deeply-rooted habit, has led me to loo
especially to the personal side of historical
and has induced me to dwell too much

Archives of the House of Orange-Nassau,—each volume c
preceded by an Introduction by M. Groen Van Prinsterer;
ments on the Succession of Spain, by M. Mignet; the N
between France and Austria, by M. Le Glay; the different
of Venetian Despatches; the voluminous Memoirs of Ri
publications of our own time. The Memoirs of Richelie
printed in 1823. The publication of the Letters and Sta
Richelieu (*Coll. des Documents inédits*), by M. Avenel, was
in 1853.

influence exercised by the acts of particular me
critical moments. This is, perhaps, natural enou
when we are dealing with times in which it
the tendency of power to concentrate and
strengthen itself more and more in a small nun
of hands.

It is unnecessary, I think, to say that,
speaking of European events and of the me
former times, I have not sought to make
comparison with contemporary or recent oc
rences, or with those who have borne a par
them. The events of former days and of
present time have their resemblances and
differences: they resemble each other in cer
points and they differ in others. To make
malignant allusion to those resemblances woul
as childish as the affectation of denying
existence would be absurd. I will here only r
tion one point of comparison, or rather of cont
between the past and the present. I have
with reference to certain epochs of misery
trouble in the history of the Low Countries,
each might be designated by the name of
individual who played the greatest part i
Hereafter, when history shall describe the
years of the independent kingdom of Belgiu

years during which the country has enjoyed greater tranquillity, greater freedom, and greater wealth than ever it did before, it will be found that personal influence of the highest kind in like manner claims respect, and that there have been acts of the loftiest self-sacrifice which, in the memory of our country, may well be mingled with those of its earlier existence.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PAGE

PREFACE . . . . . vii—xxxii

I.—INTRODUCTION.

Introductory Remarks 1
The Burgundian Period—the Transition between the Feudal and Monarchical Era 2
Characteristic Traits of Middle Ages 2
Feudal System 3
Petty Independent Sovereignties 3
Absorption of Fiefs 4
Increase of Royal Power in France 4
Disappearance of Chivalry and Feudal Traditions . . . 5
The Communes—their Decay 6
Etienne Marcel 7
Events and Political Institutions in England—The Anglo-Norman Barons—Growth of Representative Institutions 8
Causes of Differences of the Historical Development in England and France 9
The Co-existence of two Races in England 10
England subject to fewer Disorders—The Distress in France under the Valois 11
The English Possessions in France 12
Wars between Edward III. and Philip of Valois . . . 13
The Dukes of Burgundy 14

PAGE

Vigorous Condition of Municipal Government in Burgundy and Flanders 15
Sympathy of Flanders with England—Its Causes . . . 16
Jacques Van Artevelde—Difficulties of his Position, and his Death 17
The Flemish Communes victorious at Courtrai, and defeated at Roosebeke 18
Less powerful under the Dukes of Burgundy—Rivalries between the Towns 19
Increase of Royal Power in France—Organization of Parliamentary Power in England 20
The Dukes of Burgundy of the Race of Valois 21
The Part the Dukes of Burgundy play in History from their Position and Wealth 22
The Weakness of the Dukes of Burgundy 23
The Condition of France during the Reigns of Charles VI. and Charles VII. 24
Destruction of Feudalism, and imperfect Form of the Monarchy 25
Death of Charles V. and Anarchy in France 26
Personal Character of Charles VI. 27
Great Career opened to Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy 28
The two Parties of Burgundy and Orleans—Distress in France 29
Death of Philip the Bold, and Accession of John the Fearless—Misery of France under his Rule—The Murder of the Duke of Orleans 3
Character of John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy . .
The Burgundians and the Armagnacs . . . . . .
The Pretensions of England to the Crown of France—Henry V. . . . . .
The Duke of Burgundy joins England—His Murder at Montereau . . . . . .
Failure of the Dukes of Burgundy to fulfil their Missio
Philip the Good, the Last of the Dukes of Burgundy
His Character and Career—His Indecision . . .
The Treaty of Troyes . . . . . .
Henry V. proclaimed King of France . . . . . .

PAGE
Failure of the Objects of the Treaty of Troyes 41
The Distress of France produces a feeling of Lassitude—Henry VI. 42
The Duke of Bedford 43
Plots against the English in Paris 44
Joan of Arc—Her Career 45
Slow Recovery of France 46
Both Parties make Overtures to the Duke of Burgundy . 47
Philip the Good marries Isabel of Portugal—Institutes the Order of the Golden Fleece 48
His Indecision between the English and French Parties . 49
He recognises Charles VII. as King of France, and signs the Treaty of Arras 50
Charles VII. enters Paris 51
Riots at Bruges and at Ghent 52
The Object in dispute at Ghent—Municipal Elections . . 53
The Battle of Gavre, and Victory of John the Fearless—The Peace of Gavre 54
The Troubles of Flanders are appeased 55
Charles VII. of France—His Character 56
Characters of Louis, the Dauphin, and of Charles, the Son of the Duke of Burgundy 57
Happiness of France under Charles VII. 58
His Death, in 1461 59
Louis XI.—His Character 60
The chief Object of his Policy 65
His Accession viewed with Fear and Distrust 66
Growing Animosity between Louis XI. and Charles, Count of Charolois 67
The Count of Charolois invades France 68
Death of Philip the Good, of Burgundy 69
The Rivalry and Struggle between Louis XI. and Charles the Bold, of Burgundy 70
Vast Schemes of Charles the Bold 71
The Policy of Louis XI. 73
The League of the Princes against Louis XI. and the Attempt of Charles the Bold to contract an Alliance with England 74

PAGE
Failure of those Schemes 78
The Conduct of Louis XI. with reference to England and Burgundy 81
His great Ability 82
Scheme of Charles the Bold to found a Kingdom of Burgundy 83
The Battles of Morat and Nancy, and Death of Charles the Bold 84
Fall of the Burgundian Dynasty 85
Character of Charles the Bold 86
Louis XI. takes possession of Part of Burgundy . . . 87
Character of Louis XI. 88
The Influence of the House of Burgundy ought to have been greater 89
The Disappearance of Burgundy from the Map of Europe is to be attributed to want of Ability and Forethought in the Dukes of Burgundy 91
The Fifteenth Century—The Transition between Feudalism and Monarchy 92
The End of the House of Burgundy coincides with the End of the Middle Ages 94
War changes its Character and its Theatre—Charles VIII. invades Naples 95

II.—Charles V.

Condition of Royal Power in France, England, and Spain. 9
Progress of Monarchical Power in the West of Europe .
Altered Aspect of Affairs in the Sixteenth Century . .
European Nations mix more together, and enter into mutual Alliances . . . . . .
Political Science commences in the Sixteenth Century .
Commencement of the Reformation . . . . . .
Spirit of the new Doctrine . . . . . .
Undecided Conduct of the Rulers with respect to t' Reformation . . . . . .
The Italian War between Spain and France—Struggl Supremacy . . . . . .

PAGE
State of Italy in the Sixteenth Century 106
Conquest of Naples by Charles VIII., and its Recapture by the Spaniards 107
Political Conduct of Italian States,—Milan, Florence, Rome, and Venice 108
Loss of Liberty in Italy 109
Complicated State of Affairs in Europe 110
Louis XII. and the League of Cambrai 111
Policy of Julius II. 112
Characters of Louis XII, Maximilian, and Henry VIII. . 113
Death of Louis XII. and Accession of Francis I.—State of Italy at his Accession 114
Death of Maximilian, and Accession of Charles V. . . 115
The Battle of Marignan, and the Treaty of Noyon. . . 116
Three Years' Peace between France and Spain 117
Contest for the Empire of Germany between Charles V. and Francis I. 118
Election of Charles V. 119
Conduct of Francis I. in these Circumstances 120
The Part which Francis I, Henry VIII, and the Pope might have played 121
The Pope had more to fear from Charles V. than from Francis I. 122
Commencement of War in Italy under Lautrec 122
Character of the Duke de Bourbon 123
His Treason to his Sovereign 124
The great League against Francis I.. 125
His Defeat and Capture at Pavia 126
Conduct of Charles V. in this Matter 128
The Treaty of Madrid 130
Motives of Francis I. for signing the Treaty of Peace . . 131
Excuses to be made for the Conduct of Francis 132
The Defects and Contradictions of his Character . . . 133
Difference between his early Career and his Condition in after Life 134
State of Public Feeling in Europe after the Treaty of Madrid 135
Francis I. and his Allies against Charles V.—The Holy League 136

PAGE

Defeat of French Troops, Sack of Rome, and the Pope made Prisoner 137
The Peace of Cambrai, called the "Paix des Dames" . . 138
France driven out of Italy 139
Differences between Charles V. and the Protestant Princes of Germany 140
War between Charles V. and those who maintained the Right of Free Inquiry 141
Erasmus, Melancthon, Luther, Zuingli, and Calvin . . . 142
The Diet of Worms 143
Hesitations of Charles V. with regard to the Reformers, between Peace and War, Toleration and Repression . 144
Position of Charles V. with regard to the Reformation . 145
Ideas of Charles V. with respect to the Possibility of a Compromise 146
The Conduct of the Imperial Diet with respect to the Reformation 147
The Confession of Augsburg 148
Period of Transition in the Life and Ideas of Charles V. 149
He is desirous of carrying the War into Germany—The Campaign against Barbarossa 1
Difficulty of finding a Solution to the Secret Thoughts and Aims of Charles V. . . . . .
Charles signs the Treaty of Nice with Francis I. . . .
Interview of the two Monarchs at Aigues-Mortes . . .
The Temper of the two variously affected by Illness and Infirmities . . . . . .
The Insurrection at Ghent . . . . . .
Causes of the Insurrection . . . . . .
Charles V. resolves to go in person to Ghent, s put down the Insurrection—He journeys thro France . . . . . .
Charles quells the Insurrection, and abolishes the munal Privileges of Ghent . . . . . .
His Firmness of Execution and Energy of Decision Matter . . . . . .
The Management of Affairs in the Low Countri rally left to Margaret of Austria or Mary of

PAGE

Arguments drawn from the Journey of Charles V. through France 161
Doubts whether any Advances or Overtures for Peace were made 162
Schemes of Charles V. with regard to European Matters, and Illusions of Francis I. 163
Proposed Marriage between the Duke of Orleans and a Niece or Daughter of Charles V. 164
Parties in France in favour of an Alliance with the Emperor Charles V. 165
Negotiations for Peace broken off, and Commencement of War 166
Inconvenience of this War to the Emperor Charles V. . 167
Both Parties begin to think about Peace 168
The Treaty of Crespy-en-Laonnais 169
Reasons why Charles V. and Francis I. signed the Treaty of Crespy-en-Laonnais 170
The active and busy Career of Charles V. 171
Early Indications of his intended Abdication 172
His Intentions with regard to the Empire and his own Family 173
His Campaigns in Germany 174
Object of the Campaign in Germany 175
Condition of Germany in the Sixteenth Century, as compared with France or England 176
The Reformation a great Resource to the German Princes in their Struggle with the Emperor 176
Maurice of Saxony 177
The "Interim" and the "Recess" of Augsburg . . . 178
Charles V. signs the Peace of Passau with the Protestants 179
Failure of the Campaign 180
Charles V. renounces the Idea of leaving the Empire to his Son 181
The Marriage of Philip II. and Mary 182
The Abdication of Charles V. 183
His Address on abdicating at Ghent 184
His Residence at the Monastery of Juste 185
His Mode of Life in the Cloister 186

PAGE

He is visited by his Sisters, Queen Mary of Hungary, and Eleanora, Widow of Francis I. 187
Character of Charles V. 188
His colossal Power 189
His Capacity equal to his Position 190
The chief Objects Charles V. had in view 191
His incomplete Attainment of those Objects 192
Religious Unity destroyed by the "Recess" 193
Charles V. founded and consolidated the Political System of Modern Government 194
The Printed Documents in the reign of Charles V.—Publications by M. Weiss, Le Glay, Gachard, Champollion, Dr. Lang, Henne, Juste, Mignet, and Lettenhove . 195
The Memoirs of Fleuranges, Comines, Guise, the two Du Bellays, and of Montluc 197
The Negotiations previous to the Congress of Passau—The Military and Political Struggle with Maurice of Saxony 199
Conjectures as to the Conduct of Charles V. 200

III.—Philip II. and William the Silent.

The History of the great States from the Middle Ages to Modern Times follows a regular Course 201
The Rivalry of Charles V. and Francis I. 202
The Success of the Warlike Enterprises of Charles V. . 20
His Doubts as to the best European Organization to establish after his Death 5
He had not the Strength to carry out all his Undertakings
Charles V. had conceived Three great Military Enterprises . . . . . .
Spain under Philip II. . . . . .
His great Power, with France enervated by Civil War, and with Germany torn by the Reformation . . . .
Philip II. had no fixed System with regard to France Germany, or the Reformation . . . . . .
He immures himself in the Escurial, and govern . Correspondence . . . . . .

PAGE
Cruelty of Philip II. against the Reformers 210
Levelling Effects of Foreign Despotism under Philip II. 211
Difference of the Mode of Government of Charles V. and Philip II. 212
Mysterious System of Government pursued by Philip II. . 213
Despotism of Philip II.—Analogy between the Political Situation of France and the Low Countries . . . 214
Philip II. not conscious of the Changes he was working in the Government of the Low Countries 215
Philip II. no longer Master of his Political Conduct . . 216
Irritation of all Parties against the Government . . . 217
Philip II. institutes Spanish Despotism in place of the National Institutions—He quits the Low Countries, and leaves Granvelle as Minister 218
Character of Cardinal Granvelle 219
The Aristocracy driven to support the Reformation . . . 220
Comparison of the Government of Philip II. and of Mary of Medicis 221
Conduct of Margaret of Parma—The Three different Parties in the Aristocracy—Brederode, William the Silent, and Count Egmont 222
Character of Count Egmont 224
The Duke of Alva 225
After Six Years the Duke of Alva takes his Departure, leaving the Southern Provinces discontented, and the Northern Provinces separated from the Monarchy 226
The part the Prince of Orange had to play was at first Military rather than Political 227
The War which the Prince of Orange waged against Spain lasted Sixteen Years 229
The energy of the Dutch Patriots seconded the Prince of Orange 230
The Dutch Provinces become the object of Rivalry in Europe 231
The future United Provinces take a decided Place in the System of European Alliances 232
The variable and complicated Course of Events in the

PAGE

Question whether the Decline of Spain should be attributed to its Rulers 278
Excuses that may be urged in Extenuation of the Faults of Philip II. 279
Posterity condemns Philip II. 280
Works written on the subject of the Revolution of the Low Countries—Granvelle's State Papers, Correspondence of William the Silent and of Philip II, Mr. Motley's History, and others . . . . . 281—285

IV.—Cardinal Richelieu—The First English Revolution.

State of Affairs in France and Germany in the Seventeenth Century 286
Conduct of England during this Period 287
Concurrence of various Political Accidents—The Truce of 1609 288
The Treaty of the Pyrenees—The Death of Mazarin . . 289
Three rival Forces stand face to face—the Royal Power, the Aristocracy, and the Party of Liberty, or the Third Estate . . . . . 29(
The French Aristocracy . . . . . 2?
The Aristocracy lost ground in France 2
The Position of the Third Estate . . . . . .
It gained no Share in the direction of General Affairs .
Position of the Three Estates in Germany . . . . .
The German Princes become more independent, and the Imperial Power less absolute . . . . . .
The People in Germany, from the Sixteenth to the Seventeenth Century, did not pursue the same Course in France . . . . . .
The Principle of Monarchical Unity and of Feudal Independence had a different Destiny in the two Countries . . . . . .
Monarchical Power gained in France and lost in Ger
The Social Movement in England different from France and Germany . . . . . .

PAGE

The Fate of the Aristocracy in England different from what it was elsewhere 301
The Popular Party obtained more Power in England than in other Countries 302
Changes wrought in the International Relations of great States in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries . 303
In the Sixteenth Century Italy was the Battle-field of Europe, in the Seventeenth it was Germany . . . 304
The Policy of Richelieu 305
The principal Points of the International Relations of France and Spain 306
Richelieu carried out the System of Henry IV. with some Modifications 307
Richelieu's Plan of Foreign Policy 308
Richelieu's Foreign System firm but conciliatory . . . 309
The Thirty Years' War 310
The Military Events of that War turned to the Profit of France 311
Gustavus Adolphus and his Death at Lutzen 312
The Result of the Thirty Years' War 313
Grandeur of France under Richelieu 314
Supremacy of France founded on Richelieu's Foreign Policy 315
Difficulties of Richelieu in dealing with the French Court 316
Richelieu wages War against the French Aristocracy . . 317
Difficult but successful Career of Richelieu 318
France came out of his Hands greater than it was when he came into Power 319
Hatred of his Contemporaries against Richelieu 320
The Memoirs of Richelieu 321
The Object which Richelieu had in view 322
His Firmness, Exactness, and the Courage of his Mind, and the Lukewarmness of his Feelings 323
His Audacity tempered by Rule and Reflection 324
General Character of Richelieu's Policy 325
His Success in carrying it out 326
The Death of Richelieu 327

PAGE
Cardinal Mazarin 328
Character of his Policy 329
The Treaty of the Pyrenees 330
Events in England 331
The Dynasty of the Stuarts 332
Sympathy shown in England to the Stuarts 333
The Prevalence of New Opinions in England connected with the Reformation 334
Charles never recognised the Existence of these New Opinions. 335
False or exaggerated Calculations of Charles I. 336
The Parliament becomes more hostile, and the Government more arbitrary 337
The Presbyterians—their Power and Influence 338
Character of Charles I. 339
Slow Progress of the Revolution 340
The King leaves London 341
The Throne might still have been saved and the Revolution stayed 342
The Revolution passes through Four several Stages. . . 343
The War goes against Charles I. 344
The Three great Parties who divided the Country—the Royalists, the Presbyterians, and the Independents . 345
The Independents, backed by Cromwell, gained the day . 346
Conduct of Charles I. 347
The Conduct he ought to have followed 348
The Proceedings of the Independents 349
In the midst of the Vacillation of the King and of the Presbyterians Cromwell takes decisive Steps . . . 3
He advances upon London, and seizes the King's Person .
Without Cromwell the Independents would have been divided and destroyed . . . . . .
Cromwell's profound and true Judgment . . . . . .
The unvarying Qualities of Charles I. . . . . .
The Fate of Royalty in England . . . . . .
The Country right in its general Wishes and Principles
Correct Judgment of Cromwell of the Spirit of Country . . . . . .

PAGE

The Parliament disappears to make way for the Protectorate 358
The English Revolution had no important Bearing on general Events in Europe 360
The Protectorate an inevitable Incident between the Commonwealth and the Restoration 361
The Protector Cromwell 362
His Government maintained itself in the Country as an Authority commanding Respect by Force 363
Prcfessions of Cromwell with regard to the various Sects. 364
Cromwell circumspect in his Dealings with Mazarin . . 365
Difficulty of Cromwell's Position 366
His Power of Self-control 367
The Breadth and Force of his Political Sagacity . . . 368
Cromwell's Genius, Courage, and easy Conscience . . . 369
His Firmness between the Republicans and the other Parties 370
Death of Cromwell and Accession of his Son Richard—his Incapacity 371
General Monk 372
His Line of Conduct 373
The Loss of the English Commonwealth regretted in Holland 374
Change in the Condition of the English Crown effected by the Seventeenth Century 375
Importance of the Political Part played by William of Orange 376

V.—William III.

The general State of Europe after the Reformation . . 377
The Influence formerly exercised by Charles V. passed into other Hands 378
The Double Character of Politics and Religion in the Thirty Years' War and in Louis' War against Holland 379
Change in the Position of Affairs in the United Provinces 380

PAGE
Mazarin's Policy 381
Period of Transition between the Peace of Münster and when William was made Stadtholder 382
The Grand Pensionary De Witt 383
De Witt represents the Patrician Class of the "Estates" 384
Tendency of De Witt's Policy 385
Animosity and Jealousy against the Office of Stadtholder 386
Prosperity of Holland under De Witt's Administration . 387
Louis XIV. attempts to cultivate a good Understanding with De Witt 388
Louis XIV. afterwards makes War on Holland—Ruin of De Witt's Party, and his Death 389
The leading Principle in the Reign of Louis XIV. . . 390
The chief Object was to prevent the Junior Branches of the House of Austria from succeeding to the Inheritance of the Elder Branch 391
The War upon Holland in 1672. 392
State of Europe at the Time 393
Charles II. maintains a personal Alliance with Louis XIV. 394
State of Affairs when William of Orange appeared on the Stage 395
The War with Holland 396
The Triple Alliance 397
The Difficulties of William in Holland 398
Character of William of Orange 399
The Tenacity, the Coolness in Reverses, and the Patience of William . . . . . 40(
In spite of his great Qualities he remained unpopular . 4(
The Thoughtlessness of Louis XIV. in rousing the Genius of William by attacking Holland. . . . . 4(
The Dutch War the most brilliant Episode in the Life of Louis XIV.. . . . . .
Exhaustion of France in the midst of Victory . . . .
Louis XIV. victorious, anxious to make Peace, while William of Orange desires to continue the War . .
The Objects of French Diplomacy . . . . . .
The State of Affairs between England and France . .

PAGE
Position of Affairs in Austria and in Holland 408
The Peace of Nimeguen 409
A Halt in the Progress of Public Affairs 410
Commencement of Difficulties in France 411
The Prosperity of Louis XIV. begins to diminish . . . 412
The Affairs of England occupy much of the Public Attention 413
The Embarrassments of the Stuarts 414
They hesitate between two Lines of Policy 415
James II. more ambitious than his Brother 416
At his Accession he possessed considerable Power . . . 417
James II. adopts the narrower Line of Policy 418
The French Protection weakened and was dangerous to James II. 419
James, on his side, was a mischievous Ally to Louis XIV. 420
Violent Proceedings of James II. 421
Sunderland, the President of the Council to James II.—the "Dispensing Power" 422
The Three great Divisions of Religious Parties in England 423
James II. provokes the Revolutionary Movement in England 424
James II. is dethroned 425
The great Judgment and Firmness of William of Orange. 426
Hesitation and Anxiety of William 427
He decides upon making a Descent on England 428
He sails from Voetsluys 430
He announces himself not as a Conqueror, but as a Negotiator 431
He refuses every Title but that of King 432
The Commonwealth had retained but little hold on England 433
The Feelings of the Whigs and Tories 434
William III. makes advances to the Tories 435
Questionable Wisdom of this Proceeding 436
It was from the Party called the "Trimmers" that he chose his principal Instruments of Government—Halifax and Danby 437

PAGE

Unpopularity of William III.—He threatens to leave England 438
His Second Government led by a Tory Member of the House of Peers 439
But the Position of William III. abroad was great and strong 440
The Second Coalition—The Power of the British Nation made itself felt in the Balance of Europe 441
The Battle of the Boyne, and the Naval Victory of La Hogue 442
The Government grew stronger and better, and assumed a more regular form—The Toleration Act 443
William forms a more regular and solid Government, under the Advice of Sunderland, from among the Whigs 444
Jacobite Plots against the King—Loyal Addresses to him 445
The King gains from the Hatred which these Plots inspired 446
The Treaty of Ryswick 447
Question of the Partition of the Spanish Succession . . 448
The Two Treaties of Partition 449
Acrimonious Discussions between William III. and the Parliament 450
Difficulties and Cares of William III. . . . . 45'
He is reproached with being a Dutch Republican rather than King of England 4
He becomes more popular, owing to the Jacobite Plots . 4
The Character of William III. 4
The Death of William III. . . . . .
William introduced the System of active Intervention of England in European Affairs . . . . . .
The Influence of William III. in England and Europe very great . . . . . .
Comparison between the Fate and the Character of Lou XIV. and of William III. . . . . .
Everything in the "Age of Louis XIV." continues attract the Attention of Mankind. . . . . .
The Character of Louis XIV. himself, and the Varie his Adventures. . . . . .

PAGE

The "Age of Louis XIV." still remains an interesting Point of Discussion 461
The Faults and Errors of his Reign 462
The Difference in the Renown and in the Career of Louis XIV. and William III. 463
The Glory of the Latter more solid 464

HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE period during which the Dukes of Burgundy, of the House of Valois, reigned, does not yet belong to modern history. In these introductory remarks I will endeavour to indicate, in general terms, the place which these four princes, more especially the two latter of them, occupy in history. These sketches will form the introduction to a series beginning with Charles V, with whom, in fact, modern history commences. It is, at any rate, with Charles V. that political interest first appears in history, and that the exercise of power rises to the level of a science.

It was from this time, with the exception of a few years in the reign of Louis XI, that the governing powers, while they acted in public, learned to deliberate and negotiate in secret; and it becomes just as important to get to the bottom of their

thoughts, as it is to observe their acts. In the Burgundian period, which forms the transition between the feudal and the monarchical era, it would be difficult to trace and follow out any systematic government action, because authority, then weak and contested in the large countries of the west of Europe, frequently changed hands, and altered its direction.

There was, so to speak, but little political action in the court of Philip the Bold, of John the Fearless, of Philip the Good, and so it was in the courts of their contemporaries, Charles VI. and Charles VII. of France, and in those of the Kings of England. I have therefore placed by itself, as it were in a preamble, that which I have to say of the Dukes of Burgundy and of the situation in which, at the moment of their appearance on th scene, they found the royal power in the countrie adjoining that which they governed.

I.

THE fifteenth century belongs neither to middle ages nor to the modern world :—it is r feudal nor monarchical :—it holds a middl between the two. The feudal system was vised, established, generalised, and then w both in France and in England ; with no ferences, however, between the two count King of France was the equal of his va

becoming first their superior, and subsequently their master. The possession of land was then the base of the relations between the vassal and the suzerain. The owner of free lands owed only military service, without other services. Homage (that is, the recognition of a suzerain by the vassal) was for some long time only a vague form of respect, implying simply —until the time when there were standing armies and regular taxation—that service was due, without other obedience—without money payment or any positive obligation.

So long as this state of things lasted, the soil was cut up into an infinite number of petty independent sovereignties, who waged war against each other without asking the permission of the suzerain: there was no distinction between one and the other, save the accidental difference in the strength and the position of their castles, in the character of their owners, or in the extent of their domains; nor were they in any way different from the reigning sovereign, save in the fact that the latter transmitted to his heir a particular title. Of this organization of society but little remained. The possessors of independent fiefs, between whom the soil was divided in the middle ages, had in course of time become fewer in number; the fiefs had been either absorbed one into the other, or enlarged by war, by alliances, or by escheat. This transformation of the feudal system, in which its weakness was turned to account by royalty, was slow in its accom-

plishment. For a long period of time the French monarch possessed only the Isle of France, and a portion of Picardy and of the territory of Orleans.

Royalty in France made no real progress, obtained no recognition of its supremacy, and did not succeed in establishing any subordination on the part of its great vassals, until its territory was enlarged by war; until the victories of the Kings of France over the Anglo-Norman monarchs—victories attended with great difficulties, in which success alternated with reverses—permitted them to set up their personal authority in a more efficient form on a territory gained by their own right arm in battle.

These were the two first phases through which the feudal system passed in France. First there was the absorption and diminution of the independent fiefs by private warfare between the owners of the different castles; then came the increase of the royal authority through enlargement of territory and by a war which we may term foreign, although it actually took place on the soil which for centuries had been French.

Subsequently came the organization in a form of what had been established in fact royal tribunals were formed, and took the ca of the jurisdiction of the seigneurs; the warfare between the owners of castles was by royal proclamation, and judicial duel the lords were forbidden. Royalty had attained any great power; and the rules

tions which assumed the existence of its authority preceded the establishment of this very authority; but the right was gradually secured, to the profit of the crown.

By degrees, the characteristic traits of the middle ages were effaced, and gave way to a state of things which was ill-defined; the old building was destroyed while the new edifice was still left unfinished. All that was good, and generous, and simple in the middle ages vanished by degrees: whilst with the feudal traditions disappeared those of chivalry, which was more than a mere habit, and which had the substance of an institution. Chivalry was a medley of human generosity and of religious zeal; it prescribed individual sacrifice, an appeal to the Deity, the keeping of one's word, the protection of the weak; it exacted, in fact, all that even now constitutes the code of honour. Chivalry, however, as a collection of rules—one may say, as a profession of faith—was dead some time before the fifteenth century; and the Black Prince, after the battle of Poitiers, in 1356, did that which was already out of date, when he took King John with him captive into England, and made his solemn entry into London,—the French king in a suit of brilliant armour on a splendid war charger; the Black Prince himself on a sorry hackney, clad in a sombre costume, riding at a foot's pace behind the king, escorting, honouring, and ready to wait upon his prisoner.

The Crusades, too, had ceased, and the Western races, after the days of St. Louis, no longer made the pilgrimage to the Holy Land as Crusaders.

The communes, another characteristic trait of the middle ages, disappeared likewise in France about the fourteenth century. Miserable and crushed as the royal power frequently was in those times, the communes were unable to defend their existence against the House of Valois, when it was delivered from the rivalry of the great vassals. The communes in the south were the remains of the Italian municipalities; in the centre of France they had been formed by the population clustered round the castles of the nobility, without any charter or written recognition from their masters, but tolerated by them because they required their services; they were granted by charter in the provinces of the north. All this, however, must be understood in a general manner, for the territorial demarcation between the three zones of commune was by no means so well defined as we have stat it. The communes, we repeat, fell in France wl the royal power ceased to need their assista against feudalism. It is true, indeed, that government of the Provost Etienne Marcel over Paris during some years of the fou century, during the disastrous wars of that at a time when authority was so precario when its administration in any form was so that any one who seized it in a vigorous ma

who knew how to wring from an exhausted country the little money which was left, had a chance of maintaining his power : it was, in fact, an explosion of the strength of the Parisian middle classes. It acted just as revolutionary powers act, and lasted as long; and if its accession to power denoted a certain vigour in that layer of society, its destruction by the assassination of its chief was a final check to the communal element. It is in this point of view that the revolutionary dictatorship of Etienne Marcel presents itself to us, although his fall appeared to the eyes of the people of that day under another light, and was attributed in Paris to the vicissitudes of the war between England and France.

Thus, piece by piece, the machine—the whole of what constituted society in the middle ages—fell asunder. The men of that day did not see, as we see it, the progress of this great work. What strikes us with clearness was hidden from them. The events—the social transformations—which are the most striking to the eyes of a distant posterity, frequently pass unperceived before the eyes of contemporaries and immediate spectators. The gradual weakening of institutions, the substitution of one system for another, sometimes even a change of dynasty,—when there is only an interruption in the direct line of succession and the crown does not go to some one out of the family,—cause little excitement even at the moment of their taking place

The middle ages did not cease all at once, any more than the night succeeds the day in a moment of time. There are in history, as there are in the day, certain states of twilight by which light and darkness pass gradually into each other: of these transitions succeeding ages take no account; they perceive only the origin of events and their results.

We have spoken of France; let us say a few words about England.

The events and the political institutions of the two countries were not developed in the same manner. The Anglo-Norman sovereignty, founded on conquest, never had any vassals who equalled the sovereign in power and in authority. The superiority of the king over this or that vassal, taken separately, was never doubtful. The feudal period in England had another character, and the struggle for authority which prevailed in France between royalty and the barons, was carried on in England betweer the conquering aristocracy and the conquered rac The Anglo-Norman barons fought with the Saxc for the preservation of their conquest, and it only when the two races amalgamated, and w the struggle between them was appeased, th league of the barons took effect against the But the issue of this struggle again differe what it was in France.

The Anglo-Norman barons united agai king soon obtained written guarantees, wh wards became the subject of much disc

dispute, but which were never lost, and which prevented the establishment of a personal and absolute government. The charter obtained by the league of the barons embraced in its object the whole of the nation, and secured to the people individual rights and judicial institutions. In the end, and as a consequence of this condition of things, which was special to England, the elements of a parliamentary system were developed very much earlier than elsewhere. At the time when royalty in France, relieved from the rival powers which had hampered it in the middle ages, was advancing to an uncontested triumph, the English nation saw the growth of representative institutions on her soil. At first these institutions were incomplete and irregular, but in the fourteenth century they attained a fixed form and an organization which it only required time to complete. The English aristocracy did not continue to form one single body: it was divided into an upper and a middle class, and the latter amalgamated with the elements belonging to the population of the towns and to the landed proprietors whose origin was less ancient than the Conquest, so as to form with them the second chamber of Parliament. This historical development, so different from what we have indicated in France, depended chiefly on the establishment of a conquering race on the English soil, and on the especial interest this race had in defending itself. If the chief part of the great events of the

history of the middle ages in England can be traced, more or less, to the co-existence of these two races, it does not follow that we see in it the cause of all that is important in that country. When, a century after the Conquest, Henry II. put the Archbishop of Canterbury to death, it is falsifying history to see in Henry II. a Norman, and in Becket a Saxon. The struggle of the higher and lower clergy, the rivalry of the sees of York and Canterbury, and other causes, brought about this catastrophe.[1]

Thus England passed through the last centuries of the middle ages, subject to fewer disorders and miseries than France. If we attribute this to the institutions which were established at an early period in England, and which were an indirect consequence of the Conquest, we must not forget another most important difference. The war which for so many centuries set England and France against each other, always took place on the Continent; and England, being from its geographical position very difficult to invade, remained during all this time exempt from the miseries which pressed on its rival. War rag in France; meanwhile the country was desolat by anarchy, distracted by civil war, ruined bad government. All these scourges overwhel France at the same time, and nothing can melancholy and distressing as the spectacle France presents to us from the beginning c

[1] *Quarterly Review*, Sept. 1853, p. 348, &c. *Revue Cont* 1854: Thomas Becket, by M. Emile Bonnechose.

war with England till the end of the fourteenth century, under the last of the Capets, and under the first princes of the House of Valois.

We enumerated just now the characteristic traits of the middle ages which had gradually died out in the fifteenth century, and under the House of Burgundy of the branch of Valois. We must add to this list the Anglo-French war, which may be considered as belonging to the middle ages by its origin, and by the territorial conditions in which France then found itself—conditions the direct consequence of feudal royalty. This great war lasted till the beginning, but finished before the end of the fifteenth century; and its prolongation during the greater part of that century contributes to give it a transitory and mixed character which belongs neither to the old nor yet to the new state of society. It embraces in itself the catastrophes and the miseries of those two historical epochs, without displaying any of their redeeming qualities of grandeur and generosity.

The English possessions in France varied, according to the chances of war, from the end of the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century,—a period of three hundred years. But a reference to the principal facts which brought about this state of things will assist us to characterise this English dominion. The Dukes of Normandy, while they conquered England, remained nominally vassals of the King of France, as French feudatories. But in the middle

ages homage frequently was, as we have already observed, only a matter of courtesy, especially when the vassal was more powerful than the suzerain, as was the case with the Anglo-Norman kings. The English royal house was constantly increasing its domains, but not at the expense of the King of France, who, even long after the Conquest, possessed nothing that excited the cupidity of the English sovereigns. At the close of the twelfth century, one hundred years after the Norman Conquest, the English royal house had acquired, by marriage or succession, all that part of Aquitaine which now forms the departments of the Gironde, of the Dordogne, and of Lot and Garonne; and, besides this, a large block of territory, bounded on the one side by the mouths of the Loire and of the Garonne, and on the other by the coast and the frontiers of Auvergne and of the Bourbonnais. This was the domain possessed by Henry II, whose successors did not retain it. Philip Augustus, and his son Louis VIII, conquered by arms a great portion of this territory the former retook Normandy and Aquitaine; ar the latter was successful enough to be able conquer a territory extending from the Rhone Rochelle, and from Calais to Montpelier. Un his successors, Normandy and Aquitaine were and retaken several times. The rivalry be' the two kingdoms had gone through phases: there had been intervals of peace, the great war broke out between Edward I

the Black Prince with Philip of Valois, Charles V., and Du Guesclin—a war on a great scale, conducted by the most illustrious chiefs, signalized by memorable events, such as Crecy, Poitiers, and the siege of Calais, and which we may fairly call a war of succession. Edward III. claimed the crown of France in right of his mother, Isabel of France, and disputed the right of Philip of Valois, who was only a collateral of the last of the Capets; he thus contested the validity of the Salic law—which had, in fact, an authority in itself very doubtful and very obscure.

Edward III. began by being victorious and ended by sustaining reverses, and at the time of his death and of the death of his son, the Black Prince —an epoch which is contemporaneous with the accession of the House of Burgundy—Edward's possessions in France consisted only of certain points on the coast, such as Calais, Bordeaux, Bayonne, and of some places on the Dordogne.

The war between England and France was far from ending; for it continued during the fifteenth century under Henry V. and Henry VI.

We have shown up to this point, in very few words, what was the general condition of the monarchy in France and in England, and the state of the territorial possessions between the two countries before the accession of the House of Burgundy.

To complete this rapid sketch of the condition

which, at the close of the fifteenth century, is presented by this portion of Europe,—in which, during the following century, the influence of the Dukes of Burgundy made itself felt,—there is nothing important to say of the position of their predecessors in Burgundy itself. The last Dukes of Burgundy of the House of Capet do not occupy any marked place in the events of the day; and even under the Dukes of the House of Valois, Burgundy properly so called—that is, the Duchy and Franche-Comté—was not the theatre of great events. The dukes only lived there occasionally; they went into France to wage war or to take part in public affairs, and their habitual place of residence, as well as the principal seat of their government and of their court, was in those provinces which they had newly acquired—in those which Marguerite of Flanders had brought as her dowe to Philip the Bold, and in those which the House Burgundy had annexed subsequently.

These provinces, at this moment composing gium and a portion of Holland,—excluding L which formed a separate principality governed bishop—were subjected as borderers to the infl of events passing in France and in Englan they did not follow the political movement of the two neighbouring countries. This was e the case in Flanders, which, historically, was important of the provinces. That whi terises Flanders of the thirteenth and

century, is the existence of a municipal government exceedingly vigorous, and capable of offering great resistance, founded on great industrial wealth; Flanders possessed a rich soil, it had well-established commercial dealings with its neighbours, it possessed a middle class endowed with great independence of character, willing and capable of steady work, warlike if needed, under the rule of sovereigns whose power was founded in the wealth and prosperity of the country.

This is what can be said of the causes which maintained in those provinces the communal system in all its vigour, at a period when municipal freedom in France was crushed by the power of the crown. It is possible that Flanders may have retained something of Teutonic liberty, just as the Italian municipalities retained some portion of the liberty of ancient Rome.

The greater part of the Flemish communal bodies were, so to speak, self-created; their existence does not emanate from any formal charter, nor can it be traced back to any precise date. Many of these municipalities grew up by insensible agglomeration, and gradually acquired their own independence.

In the great wars between France and England, the position of Flanders with regard to the two belligerent powers—a position which varied a little according to circumstances—is in reality very easy to apprehend. The Earl of Flanders was the vassal

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of the King of France, and, moreover, was frequently attached to him by family ties. He felt that he could not take part against France without compromising his own safety and his existence as a sovereign prince. Whenever he happened to act thus, or whenever he leaned towards England, France considered him as an enemy. Many Earls of Flanders were subjected to long imprisonment in France, for having failed in what the French considered their duty as vassals of that crown. The Earl of Flanders was present in the ranks of the French army at the battle of Crecy; and the aristocracy of the country generally followed the line of conduct prescribed by their sovereign.

On the other hand, the sympathy of the industrial population of the towns was chiefly towards England. The chief inducement was a material one, as England furnished Flanders with the raw material essential to the spinning and weaving of wool, one of the principal objects of Flemish industry. Flanders likewise obeyed a political instinct—the fear of seeing the freedom of her institutions suffer from too intimate a contact with France; whereas England, allied with Flanders by the tie of reciprocal commercial interests, and having an affinity with her through her own free political institutions, England, which could have no ideas of invasion, offered to Flanders substantial advantages and a chance of sympathy and protection.

Such was, in very general terms, the condi-

the Flemish provinces in the epoch anterior to the fifteenth century—a condition, however, which it is frequently difficult to define with complete accuracy, on account of the complication of events, and their fluctuating character. In the middle of the fourteenth century, during the wars of Edward III, Jacques van Artevelde, a popular leader, exercised a complete dictatorship in Flanders. From his position, his character, the nature of the power he enjoyed, and the capacity which he displayed, Van Artevelde bears some analogy to his contemporary Etienne Marcel.

The King of England sought with assiduity the alliance of the middle classes of Flanders and of its leaders. There were moments when Van Artevelde was Edward's strict ally, and had the most complete understanding with him. But the correctness of his judgment pointed out to the leader of the Flemish middle class that his country could not take part absolutely with England: France was too near a neighbour for Flanders to throw herself entirely into the arms of England. There were some moments of difficulty when Van Artevelde was carried away by the thought of taking Flanders from the reigning family and giving it to the Prince of Wales; but the prevailing character of his conduct was moderation, and an intention of not following the populace in its passions; he wished to tolerate the existence of the reigning prince while he took away his power, and to resist the seductions of an unrestricted

alliance with England. Van Artevelde met a violent death because the people found him too strong, and because the balance which he wished to maintain was difficult. For some time he was at the head of a militia of 140,000 men, very brave, very well supplied and equipped. His death did not entail the loss of so great a portion of the power of the middle classes as was caused by the death of Marcel in France.[1]

He had a son less powerful than himself: but he had successors who were men of energy. The Flemish communes won a great victory over France at Courtrai during the first years of the fifteenth century. Eighty years afterwards, at the time when the House of Burgundy took possession of the Flemish provinces, they suffered a bloody defeat at Roosebeke, a village placed, like Courtrai, on the borders of French Flanders.

The Flemish communes were less powerful after

[1] Van Artevelde played too great a part, and his character is too remarkable, for the learned of his country not to have searched diligently into all that concerns him. They have made careful inquiries into his family history, whether his origin was patrician or middle class, into the profession of his wife, his fortune, his private habits and his attitude in public. Researches such as those relating to important a person are of value and interesting, and opinions v on more than one circumstance. But so far as concerns the g traits of his character, the nature and measure of his power, and public conduct, it appears to me that all the world nearly agrees in appreciation of his important actions, and recognises in him the session of great capacity, and of a certain moderation of view time of great passion, and under circumstances full of danger the interesting works of Messrs. Cornelissen, Rapsaet, K Lettenhove, Saint-Genois, Lenz, De Gerlache, and Voisin.)

their defeat at Roosebeke ; and under the House of Burgundy these revolts, although still conducted with vigour, were less formidable to their rulers, because these rulers were stronger, because the monarchical principle had made some progress, and because the communal liberties, by dint of being opposed, had lost ground. During the period of their vigour, they manifested some traces of republican spirit, and at the same time great zeal for their own private interests. The rivalries between different towns which occupy so large a space in the annals of Flanders, frequently arose from questions of navigation: the different towns occupied with commerce being interested in receiving with the greatest rapidity, facility, and economy, the foreign merchandise which arrived by sea.

The communal spirit of the Flemish provinces, without being extinct at the accession of the House of Burgundy, was thus weakened ; and the position of things made it clear that in the struggle between the Flemish towns and the Dukes of Burgundy, the latter would generally have the advantage. Under them and after them, the sovereigns of the Low Countries had to struggle with the communes ; other elements of resistance had indeed come to the aid of the popular movement ; but, nevertheless, the ultimate success of constituted authorities was never for one moment doubtful.

Thus, at the close of the fourteenth century, and at the accession of the Dukes of Burgundy of the

House of Valois, royalty in France, feeble as it was in regard to the persons, had become strong as an institution, and had triumphed over its rivals and over the opposition it had until then encountered; the predecessors of Philip of Valois being, since Philip Augustus and St. Louis, but feeble and unenlightened men.

In England, which was governed by men who were in general superior to the Kings of France, the parliamentary form of government was organized, and the country extricated itself from the struggle of races and parties, which had retarded the development of its institutions in the middle ages.

Communal government, after so long retaining its energy and strength in the Flemish provinces, without being actually destroyed, had still lost ground.

France and England were engaged in a secular war: at first it was territorial, but it had recently become a war of succession, since the Kings of England pretended that they were nearer to the throne of France than the House of Valois. This war was far from its end, and its chances had been various. Edward III. and his son had gained great victories, and had then suffered several defeats.

It was under such circumstances that the fourteenth century was coming to a close, that a period of the Burgundian rule was commencing, and that the princes of that House entered upon the part which they had to play in history.

II.

THE DUKES OF BURGUNDY.

THE House of Burgundy of the race of Valois has a separate place in history. It scarcely existed for one century; as the latter years of the fourteenth century witnessed its birth, so the end of the fifteenth century witnessed its extinction. There is a marked difference between that which preceded and that which followed it. Before this period, we have the old Burgundy of the Capets, which ended from want of posterity, and lapsed from want of heirs; after it occurred the partition of the Burgundian domain, and its absorption into other states, in consequence of the disaster of Charles the Bold, the last duke, and of his death without heirs male.

Under the rule of the four Dukes of Burgundy, their territory, by the marriage of the first duke with the heiress of Flanders, and then by inheritance and by acquisition, was enlarged by the annexation of almost all the provinces of Belgium, Holland, and Zealand. With the ancient duchy, with the county of Burgundy, and the provinces of the north of France as far as the Somme, it formed a considerable state, without territorial contiguity, indeed, but rich and large: it was a sovereignty without pretenders, easier to govern, and more difficult to disturb, than the neighbouring states.

The part which the Dukes of Burgundy played

in history is, however, transient. By what it did during one hundred years, under princes of moderate abilities or of a violent or undecided character, we may judge what Burgundy might have become had it lasted longer, and been entrusted to different hands.

Given as an appanage by King John to one of his sons, Philip the Bold, Burgundy, which, from the end of the fifteenth century, has disappeared from the map of Europe as an independent state, united in itself admirable elements of force and of grandeur. Its very geographical position entitled it to exercise great influence. It separated France from Germany by the duchy and the county of Burgundy, placed to the east of the French territory. It separated France from the coasts of the North Sea by the interposition of the newly-acquired territories of Flanders and of Holland. Its money resources, frequently ill-employed, were considerable; its population was sometimes turbulent, without being very dangerous to the ruling power; it was not so profoundly divided into parties as were the English or French people. Moreover, it had the power of raising soldiers, it paid its contributions and, after having been very turbulent, did not fact desire any other government than the which was over it.

The possession of these two territories on the and the north made Burgundy a state of the class. Moreover, it was a new state, placed bet

the two powers which for three centuries had been at war. It was strong enough and free enough to be able, at the suggestion of its own interests, to make or break the alliance with its neighbours: not only could it make terms with those powers themselves, but, with one or other of the parties existing in their very heart, it could be their enemy or their friend; and this with an independence and a freedom of action according to its fancy, which, during that epoch, had in it nothing unusual, and, as we are bound to believe, meant nothing blameable.

That which marks, therefore, in a special manner the character of the House of Burgundy and its history in the fifteenth century, is this: it represents, in the centre of Europe, a new political element, a state without pretenders, as strong as its neighbours, rich in the midst of impoverished kingdoms; and its territorial position alone was sufficient to secure its political influence. Nevertheless, it was a state whose existence was transient, and it was not governed by men sufficiently strong to enable it to fulfil all its destiny. The events of this epoch, when studied, explain of themselves the part which princes so important as were the Dukes of Burgundy might have played, and what they might have become, in the midst of a society so divided and of ideas so changing. They were considerable historical figures, even as they appear to us; but the disturbed state of the neighbouring

countries would have made them still grander and more powerful if, with their enormous power, their will had been firmer, their humour more serious, their conduct more consistent, and their object a higher one—had they been neither slow, nor frivolous, nor wild—had any one of the princes shown a grand character—had any one of them, for instance, to keep within their time, been a Du Guesclin, a Clisson, or a Dunois, a Black Prince, a Henry V, or a Bedford. It frequently happens that men endowed with eminent faculties fail to accomplish their destiny from the want of an opportunity to show what they are. It was quite otherwise with the House of Burgundy. The opportunity, during their brief existence, frequently occurred; but the princes were destitute of the qualities necessary to acquire a high political position, and the family existed too short a time for any one to guess what changes a power so constituted and situated could have effected in Europe, had its existence been prolonged. Of the two things always necessary in this world for the accomplishment of a great work,—opportunity and genius,—they had only the first; the second was denied them.

France, during this period,—during the reigns o Charles VI. and of Charles VII.—passed throug eighty years of disorder and anarchy. Engla went through the bloody period of the wars of Roses. National life was, so to speak, interru

in the two countries, and social life was troubled and suspended.

Feudalism was destroyed in France; the monarchical form still remained imperfect. The former institutions, in their fall, had left a void, and this void was still unoccupied. Royalty having absorbed the feudal system, and having stifled the development of the communes, ought to have supplanted the local influences by the exercise of concentrated power. One institution which dies out gives place to another. Feudalism disappearing after having lived its time, required the establishment of an energetic monarchy.

But it was not so. What so often happens in the history of nations happened then; the transformation was slow; the substitution of one form for another did not take place without long intervals; the succession remained open, and, meanwhile, the country was profoundly miserable and ruined.

It was precisely when a strong government was essential, that the government in France was most weak: it was at the time when a vigorous monarch was most needed, when a strong will was wanted to gather together the scattered remains of local institutions, when such monarchs as Philip Augustus, St. Louis, and Charles V. (the best that had reigned for some five hundred years) were indispensable—it was then that Charles V. died young, leaving France, under Charles VI. and during the early part of the reign of Charles VII, exposed to terrible anarchy.

There was then a great career open to Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. He possessed the entire confidence of his nephew, the King of France, and he deserved it more than any one among the relatives of Charles VI. He was the most considerable among them all by his power. Possessing a principality equivalent to a crown, he had a great army, personal wealth, immense financial resources in his own land, family alliances in Germany, ties of interest and of policy with England—that is to say, his position with reference to England was open, and friendly if necessary. He offered himself as one experienced in government and in war: as the sovereign of a rich and vast country, he was clothed with great authority; and his court was held with excessive magnificence.

The public distress in France, the insufficiency of the then existing institutions with a king incapable of governing,—the gravity and urgency of these circumstances to a certain degree ennobled the task, and rendered it more captivating to a pure conscience. The greatest of all dangers threatened France—the chance of finding herself exposed to rival factions, and liable to a war of which the embers were still smouldering, whilst she had neither a government nor institutions of her own. When we consider the fatal character of a position which, more than at any time, France required to be well governed, and when the monarch who could have saved the country was a raving ma

we are tempted to consider the country less blameable for drifting into the most profound disorder, the parties into which it was divided less criminal for disputing over the shreds of power, and the men themselves less culpable for kindling the flames of discord.

Philip the Bold was not fully conscious of the necessities of the time, and did not make use of his superiority over the party of the Duke of Orleans, the brother of the king, to seize upon, defend, and keep the regency; by this he might have fulfilled his duty, served his own ambition, and saved the country.

The personal character of Charles VI. interests us; the kindliness of his disposition, his chivalrous courage, his passion for war, his deep sufferings, the abandonment, the neglect, the sordid destitution in which his family allowed him to wallow; the miserable condition of a madman with occasional lucid intervals, just sufficient to enable him from time to time to recall the agonies of the previous day and to foresee those of the morrow, so as to take account of the public miseries which his transient moments of sense did not leave him time to remedy; the egotism and cupidity of those about him; the cruel contrast between the interested respect for the crown, which still rested on his deranged head, and the contempt with which the individual who wore that crown was treated by his relatives;—for all these reasons we must have compassion on this

unfortunate monarch, so conscious of his own misfortune, and the involuntary cause of the miseries of his country.

To govern France, to keep down the different parties,—the House of Orleans, the Queen Isabel —that detestable woman, incapable of saying herself or even allowing people to guess which sentiment was most dead in her, that of queen, wife, or mother, —would have required a high standard of virtue, far higher than that possessed by Duke Philip of Burgundy. France, while Philip lived, and under his influence, which was at intervals more or less felt, appeared to adapt its progress to the character of this prince—a character without depth, without decision, and without fixity of purpose. Events were as undecided as he was himself; the country lived on in the same discomfort as that in which he lived; periods of crisis were constantly occurring without coming to a head; they remained in a state of uncertainty, and the evils which overwhelmed France were neither calmed by an active remedy nor yet urged on to their results. The governing force was less brutal, less barbarous under Philip than under his successor. The distress of France had not reached its culminating point. The two parties Burgundy and of Orleans, which were afterwa destined to desolate the country, to ruin and bet it, were then forming and assembling; they armed in Paris, but had not as yet come to Men feared insurrection, burning, and pillage

cautions were taken, houses were fortified, but the torch was not yet applied. Executions were taking place, but as yet there was no massacre. The Companies, that undisciplined and dangerous horde of mercenaries, had not as yet given themselves their full licence.

Abroad, the relations with England remained in the condition of an ill-defined truce. The territorial situation was comparatively good for France, for the English had lost on the Continent a portion of what the treaty of Bretigny had given them. In Flanders Philip had only some slight differences with his subjects. The peace made between them after the wars at the end of the fourteenth century, neither destroyed their wealth nor their liberties.

Thus Philip the Bold was neither a tyrannical sovereign in Flanders nor a rebellious vassal in France. He did not stay the course of the miseries of the country, but he contributed towards their delay. He died old and insolvent in 1404.

III.

THE authority which John the Fearless, the second duke, exercised in France, was possibly even more absolute than that of his father; but it was exercised at intervals, in a violent manner, at the expense of the well-doing and of the security of the country, and there was nothing in his character or his acts,

or in the events of which he was the instigator or the passive witness, which could aggrandize the position of the House of Burgundy, or the moral power of its head. There is scarce a period in the annals of France more miserable than those fifteen years of the rule of John the Fearless (1404–1419), fifteen years which were only one long convulsive struggle. History has not ascribed to him all the miseries of that period,—the civil war, with its bloody excesses, or the foreign war with its reverses; but there is no doubt that the passionate nature of this prince contributed to them. The beginning of the reign was marked by the murder of the Duke of Orleans, the end by that of the Duke of Burgundy himself, the chiefs of the two parties who disputed in France the possession of all the power still vested in the crown, and all the wealth that still remained in the country. John the Fearless had his cousin murdered in order to destroy his party; but the Orleans party did not die with its chief, and this murder, instead of delaying civil war, precipitated its explosion.[1]

All this is miserable. The country passed through terrible sufferings; blood flowed in torrents in town delivered over to pillage, and in fields which we desolated. Terror reigned in Paris with that distin tive mark which ever prevails in all times in wb

[1] *Bulletins de l'Académie Royale*, for the year 1861, p. 558, paper of M. Kervyn de Lettenhove on the assassination of t of Orleans, and on the harangue of Maitre Jean Petit.

it rages. There was the same indifference for the lives of others in those who governed, the same solicitude for themselves, the same improvident calculations, the same pretended skill in discovering dangerous enemies and the same readiness to proscribe them.

The Duke of Burgundy, of a robust and active nature, a worthy grandsire of that other Burgundian prince who was the last of his race—equally vindictive—whose ambition was still more narrow and more grasping—knew not how to employ his ardour and his audacity otherwise than in constituting himself the chief of a faction. He forgot that for a genius like his, enterprising and enthusiastic, there was another mission to be fulfilled, that of applying a palliative to the misery of France, and attempting to secure the future grandeur of Burgundy. John the Fearless never conceived this idea any more than did his father. Both of them, the son being more passionate, the father more frivolous in character, are fit to figure, each by the side of the other, in the ranks of second-rate princes.

Let us rapidly trace the principal characteristics of the deplorable condition of France during this period.

Within there was the war of the Armagnacs. When the young Duke of Orleans, the son of the murdered Duke, had married Bonne of Armagnac, he made his father-in-law the leader of the party which was from that time called after the name of that bold Gascon.

If we compare the two factions which then fought for supremacy in France, we are aware of certain differences between them. The Burgundians were, take them altogether, more popular, even in the very worst times of the public disasters. We cannot help recognising in that party some traces of a form of government. Its task did not seem to consist exclusively in ruining the country, in taking the money, and in butchering the obstinate tax-payers. Its chief was something taken by himself: he possessed a great sovereignty, an imposing military force, and wealth of his own. If, when he leaned for support, in Paris, on the bloody faction of the Butchers, some cruel disorders were perpetrated in the name of the Duke of Burgundy, the responsibility for all that took place was never brought completely home to him.

The Armagnacs, on the contrary, were an army of brigands, recruited from the ranks of the worst class of foreign adventurers; they consisted of Scotch, Arragonese, and Lombards, who, during these days of confusion and of impunity, sought their fortune in Europe, and more especially in France. Behind this army there was nothing resembling a leader, an administration, or the court of a prince. When the Armagnacs desolated the kingdom, under the nam of the Duke of Orleans, the Duke himself lent the only his flag; and soon afterwards his long ca tivity in England commenced. When, later st the Armagnacs joined the party of the Daup

(Charles VIII.), he was living a recluse in his palace, indifferent to the calamities or the crimes of his party, and learning what took place only from public rumour.

Such is the distinction which we can admit between these two parties, or rather these two tyrannies.

Abroad, the old pretensions of England to the crown of France became more pressing, in the presence of the deep afflictions to which France was exposed, its sufferings and impoverishment. Henry V. possessed the political and military qualities of forethought and courage. He had to consider which of the two rival factions in France was the strongest, which of them presented to him the best chances of a solid alliance, and whether a union contracted with one of the two was more to his interest than a dash at France.

The counsellors of the Duke of Burgundy urged him on towards an English alliance at any price. They told him that Henry V. was the most formidable enemy he could have; that he ought to treat with him, even at some sacrifice; that France had existed some time without much suffering, although England held possession of a portion of her territory; and that the alliance with England would strike terror into the Orleanist party.

The decision rested with Henry V. He decided for war, was victorious at Agincourt, took Rouen, and occupied Normandy. It is hard to decide in

which of the two rival parties the anti-English feeling was stronger. It varied with each, according to the chances of good or bad fortune.

Posterity, in its judgment of John the Fearless, has seen, in this progress towards evil which distinguishes his career from that of his father, the fatal tendency of successive events, and the reciprocal reaction of the two wars on one another—the civil war within, and the war between France and England without. This revolution, like all others, became more passionate and bloody as the danger increased. The Duke of Burgundy, in the excitement of the struggle, became a rebellious vassal to the King of France; and during this time the French throne was occupied by a prince totally deranged, who was hawked about Paris like a standard by the faction which happened for the moment to have the upper hand; for to that faction he delegated his power, merely for form's sake, after it had wrested its substance from him by revolutionary violence.

The Duke of Burgundy, whenever he had the worst of it in France, still had one resource left; he could return to his own country, where wealth and order were to be found,—where he could forget the violence which characterised the government o France,—in the midst of a population that, durin the course of those years, did not stir up domest troubles, and took part in foreign wars only w reluctance.

When the Duke of Burgundy was murdered at Montereau, under the eyes of the Dauphin, this event was looked upon as a stroke of destiny; the mass of the public could not decide whether it was a subject of congratulation or of regret. The catastrophe alarmed, but did not afflict people. It seemed indeed to be the presage of fresh misfortunes; but the murdered man was neither lamented nor hated. The moral feeling of the age was such as to allow every one, excepting the son of the murdered Duke, to consider the event in itself with the most profound indifference.

IV.

WHILE the House of Burgundy played an important part in the drama of the fifteenth century, and while it left the mark of the personal character of its princes on the history of those times, still we cannot but see, after the death of the two first Dukes, that the House of Burgundy had failed to fulfil its mission.

After the extinction of the petty principalities of the middle ages, and before the development of the large modern kingdoms, as units of power at a moment when many things were about to be decided and fixed in Europe, the House of Burgundy seemed created for a vocation which it missed. Modern Europe has formed itself without

the House of Burgundy, and it is impossible to say what would have happened in that corner of the world, if an additional powerful state, in a central position, had sprung into being and defended its territory. Everything great which has been called into existence by the hand of God, and destroyed soon after by the folly of man, allows the imagination to conceive the continuation of its grandeur, with all its consequences. Nor is this the only political creation which would appear to have refused to fulfil the views of Providence.

Among the four Dukes of Burgundy, it was evidently the third, Philip the Good, who had the least incomplete and the truest sense of his mission. The brilliancy of his court and of his fortune, his long career, the increase of his territory, the ability which he displayed in preserving his power in the face of many perilous incidents, made him an eminent prince, the most important one of his epoch. Such at least is the view of historians, and the Turks called him "the great Duke of the West." He exercised influence in cases of grave importance; he was conscious of his power; he had a certain respect for his own dignity, and he was proud and haughty. His self-control did not prevent him from being very inconsistent in his conduct; but he knew how to maintain, at any rate on the surface, the appearance of a lord and master, according to the language of the time.

Whatever were the revolutions through which France and England passed during his life, we e

tempted to believe that, had it not been for him, events would have gone faster; that his character, with its *vis inertiæ*, its coolness in the hour of danger, impressed upon events a certain slowness. More than once during his life he was placed in a position which was critical and dangerous for all the world, but for him was full of responsibility; and yet affairs were kept in suspense for years, whilst under his father or his son all would have been decided at once. We will not say whether this peculiarity is a merit or a reproach—whether it arose from coldness or irresolution.

He had to face dangerous or embarrassing events, rather than powerful rivals or adversaries: and it would be curious to know if he would have had the same success in resisting men as, for the most part, he had in resisting circumstances. He so arranged matters that he had not to deal with Henry V. as an enemy. He was very young when Henry V. died; and he was already weakened by age, and near his end, when Louis XI. ascended the French throne. Thus he had no contest with these two princes, whose talents were so different.

When we consider the career of Philip the Good, as a whole, and when we set side by side distant dates, we find him, at the beginning and at the end of his life—the first time of his own free will, the second time drawn into it by his son—at war with, or in rebellion against, the King of France; but the very length of his reign renders less apparent these

breaches of political allegiance. Two contests with his suzerain succeeding each other immediately would attract more attention than when occurring at an interval of twenty years; more especially since the transition is marked by many shiftings to and fro, which again may be reckoned as scruples.

During the interval which separates these two epochs, and these two breaches of faith, Philip the Good practised a shuffling policy of indecision between England and France; leaning, according to circumstances, more or less towards the one or the other; and assuming just sufficient independence to take a decided part, if necessary, but generally keeping himself aloof from the contest with the liberty and calmness of a judge, so as to be certain that his influence would give the preponderance as he chose. Moreover, as we have already said, the length of his reign allowed him in all things to take his time: his proceedings and resolutions, which were dilatory, and followed upon each other slowly, were looked upon both as wise and energetic, and precluded any idea of pressure, or any suspicion of caprice.

Philip the Good then was prudent and calculating, rather brave in face of a danger to be incurred, than decided in any resolution to be taken; he was jealous of his authority, proud of his power, fully impressed with the sentiment of his greatness; he resisted the pressure of circumstances as if they

were menaces which could not reach him; he occasionally combated his political passions as if they were unworthy of his rank; altogether with an unsteady character, and a mind which was at once frivolous and flighty, he exhibited a harmonious and not unpleasing mixture of personal courage, patience, knowledge of the world, and generosity.

It may well be asked how a man with such a character, and such qualities, could have concluded and signed the Treaty of Troyes, have sold France and its crown, have brought the king and the army of England to Paris, and have shared the dishonour of Queen Isabel. The only answer is, that it was a contrast to his usual life, and a dishonour to him. The imperious desire to avenge himself upon the Dauphin, as the passive author of the murder committed at Montereau, overcame on that day all his principles, and overruled all his calculations.

"That is the hole through which the English entered France," said a Carthusian friar, one hundred years later, to Francis I, who visited the tomb of Duke John of Burgundy, and was shown the skull of the Duke, with the deep dent made in it by the battle-axe of Tanneguy du Chatel.[1]

Among all the events in which the influence of Philip the Good was exercised, there is no occasion on which it was more decisive than when he forced Queen Isabel to pronounce that her son, the

[1] Vallet de Viriville, *Histoire de Charles VII.* vol. i. p. 184.

Dauphin, had forfeited his rights to the throne of France, when he proclaimed Henry V. the true heir, and brought about the marriage of the English king with a French princess. Without the intervention of the Duke of Burgundy, the treaty would never have been signed at all. It required some powerful action between the two to bring together the King of England and the Queen of France. It required some one man with a will both strong and passionate to carry out this purpose. The Queen Isabel, who betrayed her son, and trafficked away his inheritance, was too indolent to act of her own accord. Henry V.—whether it arose from foresight, or from fear of abusing his good fortune, or from a dislike to extreme measures—would have been content with supporting the old English pretensions to the throne of France by the usual political means, or by force of arms; he would never have had the idea of taking such violent steps. He would never have looked upon the consent of Charles VI. to such treason as possible; he would never have dreamed of supposing the Queen to be invested with the regency which no one save herself could have conferred. Left to his own personal instincts, to his reason, and to his intelligence, he might probably have thought that the cause of the English succession to the throne of France would have been weakened by the use of such criminal means. There can, in fact, be no doubt that the Treaty of Troyes, instead of assuring, abridged the duration of

the English power in France: it precipitated the reaction which put an end to it. All the anticipations of those who signed that treaty were successively frustrated. Henry did not succeed to Charles VI.: he died himself young at Vincennes before the decease of the unfortunate Charles VI. England under the successors of Henry V. was in a disturbed state: it was ill governed, and could not retain the territories it had conquered. Queen Isabel of France, who only cared for security, luxury, and riches, languished in obscurity, and almost in misery. The Dauphin, on the contrary, after many miserable and misspent years, occupied a throne which he ended in making glorious. Philip the Good, whom the passion of one day had carried away so far, gained from this shameful act the gratification only of a temporary vengeance. If he shortly felt any regret, he made no haste to show it. His repentance was first shown by depression and by disgust; and when he did at last say, "I "never was English at heart, and if I did ally "myself with England, I did it only to revenge "the death of my father," it was after the lapse of many years, after the death of Henry V. and of Charles VI, and after the armies of England had quitted the soil of France.

The consequences therefore of the Treaty of Troyes (1420) were not such as had been expected by its authors, Henry V, Isabel of France, and Philip the Good. Philip placed the government of

France for about ten years in the hands of the English; but it profited neither Henry V, who died as a young man, nor Isabel, who was despised during her lifetime, nor yet Philip the Good, who, from a feeling of shame, refused for some time the offer made to him of sharing the government of France with the English.

Philip the Good has been vehemently blamed for the part he took in the Treaty of Troyes; and the blame was well deserved. He aided and abetted Queen Isabel in the sale to England of the crown of her husband and of the inheritance of her son. The spirit of vengeance, however legitimate it may be held to be when the murder of a father is in question, by no means justifies the Duke of Burgundy. In this particular circumstance, he shared and facilitated the crime of a woman whose very memory is odious.

There was in France so great a feeling of lassitude, produced by the prevalent disorders, that the treaty and the English domination were favourably accepted as a guarantee of material security. The Parisians, among others, preferred the English to the Armagnacs. The English, who had a garrison in Paris, administered all that portion of the territory held by their armies; and these exacting and proud conquerors, at the end of a short time, had only an infant of eleven months old, Henry VI, born at Windsor, to present as sovereign of France: a monarch who was destined later to be driven

from his own kingdom, and who only brought to the throne a mediocrity of intelligence closely bordering upon idiotcy. This made no difference; the French preferred, in the first instance, the government of strangers to a state of anarchy.

The Duke of Bedford[1] exercised the functions of Regent with authority and with capacity: the English army met with that reception which is given by timid people, in troubled times, to the police. It was not that the condition of Paris was improved, or that sickness and famine had ceased to rage. But the miseries had been so great, that people hailed any change: all patriotic sentiment was extinguished, and there remained in the minds of the Parisians but one single desire—that of obtaining some protection against lawless plunderers.

In Burgundy, where the sufferings had not been so great, the treaty was still worse received, and Philip, during the English occupation, would have willingly inclined towards the sentiments of his subjects. The gradations by which his mind was led, first to manifest coldness, then dislike, towards the English domination in France, and which at length induced him to resume his ancient and normal position with regard to France,—this movement was accomplished with extreme slowness. It was necessary that he should see France herself pass from resignation to discouragement, and eventually to disgust. We can trace in him the motives of

[1] Bedford had married Anne of Burgundy, the sister of Philip.

personal dislike towards the English—among others, the marriage of Jacqueline of Hainault with the Duke of Gloucester; and at the same time we remark more constancy and devotion displayed by the friends of the Dauphin. Several plots against the English were formed in Paris. Philip was profoundly impressed with the conviction that, so long as the two rival powers fought on the soil of France without any marked success, the alternating victories or defeats would produce nothing but indifference in the minds of the French. The war could not go on for ever, and peace depended upon him; it was his interest—his frontiers were threatened and devastated. It required the constant influence of these motives, these repeated and ripe reflections, to alter the determination of the Duke of Burgundy. The French, unconnected with the Dauphin's party, who had begun by looking on the English government as a safeguard, ended by recognising its oppression. The Dauphin, after having been governed by selfish favourites, at last met with useful ministers. The provinces which obeyed him were principally those in the centre of France, precisely those which the English had held under the Capets. The conversion of the Duke of Burgundy, therefore, can be attributed at one and the same time to personal motives, to the impatience shown by France to the English domination, and to the tenacity of the party in favour of a native monarchy.

It was about this time that we hear the first

mention of Joan of Arc. Her history is well known. Her visions, her purity, the life she led in her village, the journey of a hundred leagues she made from Vaucouleurs to Chinon, where the Dauphin then was,—her marvellous entry into Orleans, the raising of the siege, the coronation of Charles VII, the acknowledged truth up to that time of all her predictions,—all these circumstances have been repeated a hundred times, with details which vary according to times and ideas. The general truth of the history is no longer contested: her captivity, her sufferings, the trial, the agony and the execution, bring the story to a mournful close. The hatred which pursued Joan of Arc, and which was only allayed by her death, was political hate. The English feared her power, and envied her celebrity. The history of her trial, longer even than that of her triumphs, exhibits national hatred pursuing her to her very death. The University of Paris pronounced a verdict in conformity with the wishes of the English; the illustrious Chancellor of the University, Gerson, who, without doubt, would have shown greater independence, was expiating in exile his fidelity to the Dauphin's cause. Certain ideas of that time have ceased to exist, in like manner as the passions of that time are now extinct. No one now any longer denies that Joan of Arc was more frequently obeyed than guided by men of character and experience; such as were Xaintrailles, Dunois, and Richemont. It is open to us now, as

formerly, to admit or to deny the supernatural character of her mission; but it is long since every one has recognised the sincerity of her convictions and of her devotion to the king's cause, as well as the uprightness and simplicity of her soul. The scepticism of Hume, the philosophical historian of England, agrees on this point with Father Daniel, who represents the orthodox French opinion.[1]

Some time still elapsed before France, ruined and ill at ease, was in a position to regulate her own affairs, and that peace at home and abroad was restored. Her recovery was slow; generally speaking, such serious maladies have a more rapid conclusion. But although France still went through long years of warfare and of suffering, of disorder and of disquiet, nevertheless from this date we may recognise the first symptoms of her recovery.

Civil war, a foreign occupation, the madness of the King, the absence of the Dauphin from Paris, the hostility of the Duke of Burgundy, the rivalry of the princes of the blood royal, the disorders of the armed force,—all these scourges, all these

[1] *Procès de Condamnation et de Réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc;* Documents published by M. Jules Quicherat, in the Collection "Des Mémoires de l'Histoire de France," of Messrs. Michaud and Poujoulat; "Notice sur Jeanne d'Arc," first series, vol. iii. The second volume of *l'Histoire de Charles VII.* by M. Vallet de Viriville, contains long and touching details concerning the events in which Joan of Arc took part. We there find new details on the rival interests which her military success caused among the immediate friends of the Dauphin, such as Georges de la Trémouille and Renaud de Chartres. The first half of the volume, pp. 42-234, is devoted to the history of Joan of Arc, and of her trial.

misfortunes, had existed simultaneously, and had entailed their disastrous consequences. They gradually and successively disappeared, reacting one upon the other, during the period when affairs were becoming better, as they had done whilst they were becoming worse.

At first the change was insensible. The French armies went through alternate phases of gain and loss which left no trace, and were viewed by the country with indifference. It was only at the end of a certain time that on the side of the French party we can trace a real success. The Duke of Burgundy for some time showed no favourable change of policy in his conduct towards France. The spirit of vengeance had been softened in him probably before he was aware of it, certainly before he confessed the change in his sentiments. The feeling of the country was equally modified in an imperceptible manner, when the position of the national monarchy began to mend, and when Philip, from the enemy which he was, became indifferent, and when moreover a slight return of confidence in the future arose.

According as this movement was appreciable, the two parties made strenuous advances towards the Duke of Burgundy—the one to keep him, the other to obtain his alliance. "Take care," said the English, "lest fortune changes, if you do not stay on our "side."—"The English are of no assistance to you in "anything," said the French, "and you receive no

"benefit from their alliance!" Learned doctors examined, on both sides, whether Charles VI. had the power to alienate his crown and to disinherit his son. Philip at this time lived much in Flanders; he celebrated there, with festivals of unexampled luxury, his marriage with Isabel of Portugal, his third wife.[1] He instituted, in the midst of a splendid court, the Order of the Golden Fleece, destined to rival in its glorious associations the Order of the Garter, founded by Edward III.[2] It was also about this time that the death of the Duke of Brabant put Philip in possession of the duchy of Brabant, of the marquisate of Antwerp, and of all the inheritance of Jacqueline of Hainault. He had previously bought from the last Count the county of Namur.

Philip appears to have done all he could to make the gradual upward progress of the French monarchy as slow as possible—a progress that was uninterrupted from the appearance of Joan of Arc on the scene, till the time when Charles VII. found himself at the head of a kingdom that was pacified and saved. It is curious to mark the turns and transitions of policy—timid and carefully managed as they were—which were employed by Philip the Good, before he entered into the previously-existing relations with

[1] The two first had been Michelle of France and Bonne of Artois.

[2] The Baron of Reiffenberg, in his *Histoire de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or*, gives no decided opinion on the origin to be given to the institution of this Order. See on the festivals celebrated at Bruges on this occasion, *Recherches sur Louis de Bruges, Seigneur de la Gruthuuse*. Paris, 1831, in 8vo. pp. 265-324.

France. For some time he did not confess that he repented having signed the treaty dethroning the King of France; but he showed it by a long course of inaction, by a dilatory mode of conduct, by doubtful and contradictory proceedings, before he avowed this change by evident acts, or declared it by spoken words. From the point of view where we now are placed, and bringing together circumstances separated by long intervals, we are now enabled to follow, step by step, his hesitation and the oscillations of his mind. Thus he began by declaring to the King of France that he forgave him the murder of John Duke of Burgundy, and almost at the same time he accepted from the hands of the King of England the Regency of France. Then he fell away from the English alliance, and entered into negotiations with Charles VII. which led to nothing; and this he did without recognising him as King. Subsequently he laid down with him the conditions of a pacific arrangement; this he again broke off, and returned to Paris as if he had all along remained the ally of the English. Later still, he favoured the conferences between France and England—conferences which came to nothing, and in which it was confessed that the peace was one of the most difficult to attain, that the pretensions of the two parties were almost incompatible, that the English wished to keep all their French conquests, while the French were disposed to give up nothing, or next to nothing.

He allowed the validity of the Treaty of Troyes and of the renunciation of Charles V. to be discussed; and it was only after all these tentative measures and contradictory movements, after having recognised the fact that he could no longer remain neuter, and that the French party had become the more powerful in France,—it was then only that he signed the Treaty of Arras (1435), concluded a separate peace with Charles VII. and recognised him as King. The decisive reason that guided the Duke of Burgundy, in this return to a French alliance, was undoubtedly the improved position of the Crown in France, and the change in the condition of the country. Such was the uncertain and tortuous course of policy pursued by Philip the Good, destitute alike of frankness or courage, with regard to France and England, in the period between the Treaty of Troyes when he sided with the English, and the Treaty of Arras when he attached himself to the French party. His policy was undecided; and the events, the public spirit of the day, and the military position of the two parties were equally such. Philip, after having become a partisan of the English with the precipitancy of a passionate nature, was, in retracing his steps, as timid as he was slow; he followed events with docility, or guided them with caution; nor did he join the French party and the King until fortune returned to them, and set him the example.

This hesitation on the part of the Duke of

Burgundy was not so much the calculation of prudence as the desire to place an interval of space between events which it was painful to him to see approaching. But for this, the exercise of a firmer will, joined to such power as he wielded, would have put an end to the war much sooner, would have brought Charles VII. to Paris, and would have restored Normandy to the hands of that prince. The Duke of Burgundy would willingly have delayed attaching his signature to the treaty, had not the state of affairs, ripened as it was by time, swept away his hesitation and his scruples.

But France, bowed down by misery, impatient and weary of the war, was still disposed to strike one last blow. The English garrison at Paris was weak; and as the people manifested no wish to aid it, the King entered his capital without fighting. The great struggle was at an end—every one felt it to be so—and Philip had been reconciled to France only under this impression. It was long before peace was signed between England and France; but the war between the two powers languished, and in the encounters France was invariably successful. Indifferent and without occupation as had been the Dauphin in his youth, governed and kept apart from business by ambitious courtiers, always absent from Paris and from the army, Charles VII. now changed his character and his habits: he became henceforth the King of France, and not the King of Bourges; he prepared

for his people a future of order and of tranquillity. France, slow in recovering her strength, at any rate enjoyed some peaceful years; and the name of Charles VII. is honourably remembered in history for the substitution of organized armies in lieu of the bands of adventurers and freebooters.[1]

After his third marriage, and after the peace of Arras, Philip the Good had twice to interfere with what was passing in the Flemish provinces. The first time the difficulties arose at Bruges, the second time at Ghent; on both occasions--and a tolerably long interval of time elapsed between each—Philip had his own way after the struggle was over. The Flemings saw with displeasure that Philip, like his predecessors, was absorbed in foreign affairs, and felt but a secondary interest in possessions which furnished him, when he needed it, with ample resources in money. He made several appeals to them to contribute a voluntary aid, but in vain. He wished to impose on Ghent a tax on salt, which they refused to give; and he was many years without setting foot in their town. The people of Bruges were jealous of the favour with which the Duke of Burgundy treated his subjects in Picardy; moreover, they reproached him with protecting the agricultural interest of the flat country to the detriment of the manufacturing trades of the towns, and with having made the port of Sluis, through which all English goods were imported, too inde-

[1] Vallet de Viriville, vol. iii.

pendent, as far as the interests of Bruges were concerned.

The Duke of Burgundy had to contend against a violent riot at Bruges, where he exposed himself to danger without sufficient escort, and where his life was in jeopardy. Had it not been for the presence of mind of a workman, who forced open the city gate and allowed him to escape, the people of Bruges would possibly have made him a prisoner or a victim to their violence. The sentence which he pronounced against the insurgents, after the revolt, was severe. He condemned the insurgents to pay a heavy fine in money, to beg pardon of their sovereign, and to undergo some restrictions in the electoral laws affecting their magistrates.[1]

The contest which Philip the Good had with Ghent, some time later, was of a character more purely political. In these insurrections against the sovereign, we may remark the fact that the hatred of the towns one against another was so great as to prevent any union against the sovereign, even when their grievances were identical. The hatred against the rival city overpowered every other feeling. At Ghent, the object in dispute was especially the freedom of their municipal elections; and in the course of this contest the people of Ghent gave the Duke of Burgundy the opportunity of carrying on a long and a final contest against the

[1] This event is narrated by Monstrelet with more of detail than clearness. (Monstrelet, vol. i. and ii. pp. 213, 216, 220, 224.)

communes. The great difficulty between him and the city was this: the deans of the two principal guilds being electors, the magistrates elected (*échevins*) belonged always to the same guilds; these guilds were the most powerful and the most independent, and the Duke thought that by such a composition of the magistracy the legitimate influence of the sovereign received great detriment. He wished to reform the law, and the war began. It was long and bloody. The army of Ghent amounted to forty thousand men; it could have been raised to one hundred thousand, if necessary. To conquer the town of Ghent appeared an impossibility to Philip. The unexpected capture of the fort of Gavre, held by the people of Ghent, and their desire to retake it, induced them to march their army out of the city. The battle of Gavre, in which twenty thousand of the citizens perished, was fought and won by the Duke, under the walls of the fort. Charles VII, in his character of suzerain, several times offered to mediate between the citizens and their liege lord. He pronounced sentence against them, and sent a herald to read it to them. The herald failed in accomplishing his mission, and with difficulty saved his life. The Count of Charolais, Philip's son, who subsequently became Charles the Bold, was present at the battle of Gavre, in defiance of the express orders of his father. His passion for war and the wilfulness of his character were manifested from the very first.

The sentence pronounced by Philip was a severe one. The insurgents had to pay fines, and were condemned to come before their sovereign, to the number of two thousand, in their shirts and with bare feet. Moreover, the deans of the guilds were deprived of their right of electing. The magistrates were in future to be nominated by four commissioners named by the Duke, and four appointed by the town. This sentence, which was confirmed by virtue of a treaty called the *Peace of Gavre*, marks, as does the battle of the same name, an important epoch in the annals of Flanders. The treaty shows that the power of the Dukes of Burgundy was becoming greater than that of the communes. Mary of Burgundy, the granddaughter of Philip the Good, in a time of great distress and embarrassment, reversed this sentence, and restored to the people of Ghent the privileges which Philip had abolished. But the time for the preponderance of the communes had passed. When the Flemings rose against Charles V. and Philip II, their strength failed them in their contest with these monarchs, and they were beaten in the sixteenth, as they had been beaten in the fifteenth century.[1]

[1] We find many details on this campaign, which ended with the battle of Gavre, in the *Recueil de Documents inédits sur l'Histoire de la Belgique* published by M. Gachard, vol. ii. pp. 92, 95, &c. See also the learned and interesting *Histoire de Flandre*, by M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, vol. iv. pp. 355-497.

V.

THUS the troubles of Flanders were appeased under Philip the Good, as those in France ceased under Charles VII.; and these two princes, whose early years had been so agitated and so tragic saw the dawn of more tranquil days. The moderation of character, which in Charles for some time had taken the form of indifference and carelessness, and in Philip showed indecision and a desire to temporise, had some part in this return of tranquillity. A man of a more passionate or unquiet temper than Charles VII. would have felt aggrieved by the existence even of the relics of the English faction, and by his incomplete and insincere reconciliation with the Duke of Burgundy; the want of military and civil discipline, after miseries so long and so deeply felt, would have vexed him, and he would have derived less pleasure and less profit from the calmer condition of the country. Charles VII, however, as his nature remained the same,—as he retained his indolence in the maturity of his years, —showed neither impatience nor mistrust in the exercise of his royal prerogative. He had much to endure from the jealous disposition of the Dauphin, who was ambitious and egotistical in his youth, and who was destined to present later, in his policy and in all his tastes, such striking contrasts to his father.

The latter years of Charles VII. appear peaceful, when we compare them with those of his early reign. He had to ask himself more than once, first, whether the peace with the Duke of Burgundy would be maintained; next, whether England, during the intervals of peace in the civil wars of the Roses, would not take up arms again to recover her lost provinces in France, especially those she had possessed so long and so securely—Normandy and Guienne; and also whether the French partisans of England, who were now dispossessed, would not again rebel.

The heir of Philip of Burgundy, whose character differed essentially from that of the Dauphin of France, caused also profound anxiety to his father. His temper was uncontrollable; and the passions of these two young princes, destined to meet later, and to measure their strength in a memorable contest, already interposed elements of discord between the two courts. Charles VII. was by no means pleased that the Dauphin, who impatiently demanded, without success, the exercise of some power in France, should parade his discontent and his anger in the court of Burgundy. For his part, Philip, ill and weakened by age, saw with terror that his heir, at variance with him in all things, in lieu of attempting to evade, seized with avidity all points which gave an excuse for hostility with France; so that he even pretended his life was in danger from French agents, and openly expressed his suspicions

by saying that all the assassins of Montereau were not dead.[1]

It was owing then to the personal characters of Charles VII. and Philip, that the end of Charles VII.'s career was not disturbed by war. Men more carried away by temper would easily have found,—as their successors did find later, and as Charles the Bold very soon found,—that sufficient subjects of dispute, both domestic and foreign, still remained in the three countries formerly at war with each other, to disturb or drive them into hostility.

The personal action of Charles VII, however little apparent, was efficient and successful towards the close of his life: his light, facile, and flexible character did not indeed become active, but it exhibited greater seriousness and wisdom.

He had it much at heart to hasten the return of order, and to make the peace lasting. Although he did not give up the retiring and listless habits of his youth, and lived, as he had done before, much away from Paris, yet he had about him enlightened and honourable advisers, and his military regulations have remained celebrated. The English, driven out of the country, attempted to recover in the south the territory which the Black Prince had occupied and governed; but the attempt failed. Although the English left behind them some who regretted their absence—although the French garrisons were weak, the taxes heavy, and the liberty of the subject much

[1] Vallet de Viriville, vol. iii. pp. 104, 107. Pierre de Brezé.

restrained—the English could not re-establish their rule. Charles VII. retook Bordeaux, which for a moment had eluded his grasp, and he retained possession of all the kingdom. This was a happy epoch for France. The King exercised a mild, kindly, and confiding authority over his subjects, suitable to the times and to the condition of the country. He was patient with the Dauphin; and, after having in vain tried to induce him to live near him, or in his own government of Dauphiny, he was content that he should continue to live with the Duke of Burgundy, who, he said, paid him so much attention only from the respect which was due to the King his father. He was at peace with England, on the faith of a truce, he organized his army without giving any pretext for war, and accepted as evils which he could not help the indecision of the Duke of Burgundy, the doubtful faith of the Duke of Brittany, and the preference which the princes of the blood showed for the Dauphin over himself. After a crisis which had lasted for nearly a century, it was better and more reasonable to allow these traces of a violent storm to die out of themselves, without taking too much account of them. He had a treaty of peace with his neighbour; he saw England absorbed and weakened by the Wars of the Roses, and by deeply seated troubles; he fostered in France the elements of order; he ruled over a larger surface of reconquered territory, and over a more obedient population, than any sovereign

of France had done for some time; and he bestowed on his country a government which was kindly, beloved, and not vindictive—a government which would have continued to suit France and serve her purposes so long as the King might have lived.

Such was the inheritance which Charles VII. on his death, at the age of fifty-eight, left to his son Louis XI. (1461).

Louis XI. had much more ability, as well as more political intelligence and activity, than his predecessor. He had, however, much less kindliness of disposition; he was less simple in his desires, and less disinterested. Embittered against his father—impatient to succeed and to reign—anxious to make his power felt by his enemies abroad, and his authority respected by those at home—he wished to destroy, in the league of the princes, one of the last manifestations of feudalism, and to crush its expiring efforts. Himself verging on mature age, and full of confidence in his own faculties, after a few hours of affected grief, he showed indifference to the death of Charles VII, a total want of respect to his memory, and contempt for the moderate policy of the latter years of his father's reign. The qualities of the dead monarch, which perhaps would have been of no service to Louis XI. in his later career, would have been of essential use at its commencement. The policy of Charles VII, when he did begin to govern, had the impress of kindness; the policy of Louis XI, in his easy as well as in his

difficult times, was uniformly cunning and wicked. No one would venture to say that Louis XI. would have overcome, as he did, the embarrassments of his reign by imitating the conduct of his father; but we may affirm, without fear of contradiction, that he would have done well, had he at least commenced with the same moderation with which Charles VII. finished.

His vindictive feelings, on the contrary, got the better of his reason; and Louis XI, when he ascended the throne, showed the wickedness of his heart, without giving any idea of the amount of his ability. Those who were looked upon with suspicion by his father obtained the favour of the son; the father's trusted counsellors were disgraced. The well-tried friends of the last reign saw themselves repelled, and animosities which had been smothered were revived. The ill-humour which had been pent up and accumulated in Louis XI. during a long and painful minority broke out in all things, without profit, without reflection, and to the detriment of his own most serious and nearest interests. It was reserved to him in subsequent times to show his abilities for mischief—it would have been far better, without doubt, to have been at the same time able and kindly;—but, at the beginning of his reign, he did not even display his dominant quality, whilst he was deficient both in generosity and in prudence. This was not his real nature. His heart was cold and hard; but in the whole of his policy towards

the sovereign powers, his neighbours—in his struggle with Burgundy and with the French princes—he developed the resources of a genius at once penetrating and prudent.

Louis XI. was not possessed by the passion of those great things which his power, his faculties, and the circumstances in which he was placed would have justified. He did not aim at them either for France or for himself. He saw the House of Burgundy perish under his eyes, without attempting to extract from its fall all the profit which he might have derived from it.[1] Nevertheless, the temptation was very great, and the moment solemn. When Charles the Bold died, his daughter was neither of the age, nor had she the reputation, which give power. On the part of Louis XI. this moderation was a system. He wished to acquire, on the condition that he ran no risk—to keep rather than increase his territory—to avoid battles, not from cowardice, but because he thought it absurd to place on the throw of one die such great stakes as his fortune and his life: he wished to have everything secure, and to indulge in no dreams of conquest—to manage ably and tranquilly the affairs of France and his own, without compromising or exposing France or himself. During his whole reign he only fought two battles, those of Montl'héry and of

[1] Louis XI. appropriated the Duchy of Burgundy as reverting to him by right, as a male fief of the crown. He never dreamt of conquering any other portion of the Burgundian inheritance.

Guinegate. He made himself unpopular both with the nobles and with the townspeople, because while his purpose was to crush the aristocracy, he did not hesitate to oppress the towns with imposts. He ruled harshly; he preserved the country indeed, but he made it miserable and discontented; in short, he followed a policy which resembled his own character —a policy destitute of any moral principle. It was thus that Louis XI. made life intolerable to every one, and carved out for himself an existence full of suffering.

Louis XI. possessed qualities of mind so well developed, so intense, and so strangely mingled with vices of the heart, as to present to us the study of a most complicated nature. We may observe that all that which in the character of other men is mere detail and a sort of passing shade, was in him an essential and striking trait. Nothing was superficial, nothing was insignificant. The smallest asperities of surface which showed themselves in him were deeply rooted. Up to a certain point he was neither ferocious, nor dissimulating, nor indiscreet: neither irascible nor enduring, neither suspicious nor trusting: but he was in no degree either kindly or compassionate. The paths by which he attained his end, which was a serious one, well worthy of a man of sense, were as infinite as the secrets and the windings of his own mind. He was active and punctual; calm, if necessary, as befitted a leader; patient as a craftsman who slowly works

at any monotonous daily task; he was ardent in the pursuit of success, yet he knew how to wait for it; though at other times he risked his success by some imprudence of language or of conduct—as if his object were to show, by his calmness in adverse circumstances, how dexterous he was in getting out of his difficulties. He was very proud of what in these days would be called diplomatic skill—a skill full of subtlety, and made up of meanness, of small details, of treachery, and of cruelty. He had full confidence in his own power of seduction and fascination, and he made trial of this power without discretion; he gave himself up to this temptation without thought; from a confidence in his ability, he talked without reserve, even with those whom he considered clever; and he afterwards left no sacrifice, no effort, no inducements untried to appease or again to win over those whom he had thus hurt or offended. As he did not believe that others possessed the good feelings or even the good ordinary impulses which were wanting in himself, he invariably took men by their bad side; he threatened them with imprisonment or torture; he trafficked with them for a price, or for promises of his favour, according as he thought he had to deal with those who were timid, avaricious, or proud; he always preferred real power to the outward show of it, what was useful to that which glittered, the substance to the form. For the rest, he was indifferent to many things; he was coarsely clad, like a man

of the people; nevertheless those who looked closely at him could trace that expression, at once sarcastic and deeply penetrating, which denotes a combined habit of raillery and of reflection.

Such is the idea which we are able to form of Louis XI, and of his mode of action in political affairs. We must, however, be on our guard against the effect which men present when seen at a distance, and we must take care not to attribute to Louis XI. the thoughts which he causes to arise in our minds, and which were not in his. When we read what was said of him by his contemporaries—well-disposed or hostile,—such as Comines, Olivier de la Marche, Chastelain, Jean de Troyes, and by others who knew him; when we take account of their judgments and of the motives of their opinions—judgments and opinions, for example, like those of Comines, which were very indulgent—we find that we possess of Louis XI. a complete portrait: no trait of his character is in shadow. Louis XI, in consequence of his taste for direct and personal action, and of his desire to see, to know, and to do everything by himself, has revealed himself to posterity with the greatest complaisance.

To make a solid peace with England, without giving up any of the French territory; to acquire a good frontier on the side of the Burgundian possessions, and secure the course of the Somme; to be the absolute master in France, by governing the different parties and institutions, by disuniting

or disarming the princes, by destroying those representatives of expiring feudalism;—these were the chief objects of the policy of Louis XI, if we consider his reign, taken as a whole. It would have been long before he would have attained his object, had he persevered in the course by which he begun. His bad reputation, his quarrels with his father, his habitual inconstancy, his unquiet humour, were sufficient to insure his accession being viewed with disfavour, and even with fear. His action fully justified and confirmed the feeling of the country. The princes of the blood, the population of the towns ground down by taxes, the attendants of the king his father driven away in disgrace,—all this made France pass from a feeling of distrust to one of discontent. Louis XI. then did what he learnt subsequently to avoid: he raised a strong prejudice against himself, in order merely to gratify his vengeance and hatred. All his life he was indifferent to the misfortunes of others; but time taught him the prudence of doing as little mischief as possible to himself, a maxim he seemed then to ignore.

Philip the Good was old, frequently ill, and no longer took any interest in public affairs. At peace with France, with the benefit of a separate truce with England, considering the King of France attached to him by the debt of hospitality, and the sovereign over a prosperous country, Philip was justified in thinking that his task was finished, and that he might leave the direction of public affairs

to his son, the Count of Charolais.[1] The Peace of Arras had lasted thirty years, and during this time several causes of dissension had arisen between France and Burgundy. The possession of the frontier towns, the good understanding of the Duke of Burgundy with the French princes banded against Louis XI, the difference of opinion with regard to the rival parties in England, and, lastly, the encouragement afforded by Louis XI. to the revolution at Liège, which was a source of danger to the Duke of Burgundy;—these were the principal causes of division. But with Philip the Good, whose character was conciliatory, these grievances might produce coldness without hostility, and embitter relations without embroiling the two sovereigns. With the Count of Charolais, they became causes of war, because the latter, instead of endeavouring to allay them when they arose, would have willingly raised such grievances when they did not exist. Neither Louis XI. nor the Count of Charolais took a strong interest for either the House of York or that of Lancaster ; of the two Houses, France favoured rather the cause of Henry VI, while Burgundy preferred that of Edward IV. But there were other subjects of quarrel, which touched them nearer and were far more grave. The Count of Charolais insinuated that his life was threatened by the secret agents of Louis XI. The people of Liège, to whom the King of France had only given

[1] States-General of 1465.

encouragement and promises, sending neither money nor men, had risen in revolt, while they counted on French protection. Nothing more was wanting to make the army of the Count of Charolais cross the Somme, the Oise, and the Seine. Without meeting a French army, he pitched his camp on the south side of Paris.

Thus Louis XI. had managed, by quitting the beaten track of his father, to create for himself a bad and dangerous position between the Burgundian army, the league of the princes, and the general discontent of the country; but it was then that his political ability was revealed. The question was to dissolve the league of the princes, which represented the ancient coalition and what remained of the Armagnac party: at this time the league was led by the young Duke of Berry, the King's brother. Louis XI, convinced that the princes only wanted appanages, governments, and pensions, made large concessions; among others, he gave Normandy to his brother. He had a personal interview with the Count of Charolais, under the walls of Paris, and conceded to him the course of the Somme—that old subject of dispute between the two neighbouring sovereigns. It cannot be denied that he showed a degree of coolness and dexterity—and, we must add, a remarkable degree of falseness—in dissolving so dangerous a coalition.[1]

He gave himself a great deal of trouble, and

[1] Treaty of Conflans.

imposed on himself many sacrifices, to bring about a state of things less favourable than that which he had inherited from his father. This was a lesson he gave himself, and by which he profited. There remained only the insurrection in Liège, which he did not at that moment attempt to repress, after having assisted to bring it about. The people of Liège were in open revolt, and they persisted in it.

We may say, then, that at the beginning of his reign, Louis XI. learned from bitter experience the science which afterwards served him so well. Personal experience developed in him the dormant seeds of his faculties: and if he suffered then for having committed the double mistake of being both vindictive and unskilful, he only reformed on one point: he avoided imprudence for the future, but he retained his liking for hypocrisy and evil ways.

VI.

It was in the midst of these events, on the 15th of June, 1467, that Philip the Good died at Bruges, and the Count of Charolais succeeded to the inheritance of Burgundy.

The struggle between Charles the Bold and Louis XI. may be reckoned as one of the great duels in history; it was one of those rivalries between man and man which were reproduced and

personified later in the rivalry between Francis I. and Charles V, between Philip II. and the Prince of Orange, and again between Louis XIV. and William III. The reign of Louis XI. belongs to an epoch when the royal prerogative had not yet freed itself, as far as its material position was concerned, from the pretensions of the feudal barons; when the family feuds were not yet ended; when the King of France had still to defend the possession of his sovereignty against the attacks of the royal family; while, on the other hand, the King was strong enough to aim at becoming the absolute master of France, and Louis XI. ended by being so. His rival, by his ambition and his audacity, by the vast circle of enterprises which he compassed, and the sacrifices which he imposed on his people,—by the impatience of his humour and the uncertainty of his projects,—contributed to make his career more remarkable, and his actions more memorable. Louis XI. and Charles the Bold were more important personages, displayed greater power, and exercised greater authority over the different nations they governed than their predecessors had ever exercised. They present to us a far grander spectacle.

In these contests between two historical personages, there is generally a marked difference in the character, the conduct, the ambition, and the objects of the champions. There is no one who resembles Charles V. less than Francis I, Philip II.

than William of Orange, William III. than Louis XIV, or Charles the Bold than Louis XI. Charles the Bold was the attacking party, Louis XI. defended himself; the former aspired to vast conquests, the latter wished to preserve what he possessed; the former displayed audacity, the latter prudence. It has been frequently said that Charles the Bold was the last representative of feudal policy, and that Louis XI. was the first who unfolded with any success the flag of monarchy. We must not be misunderstood: the second part of the assertion is truer than the first.

The plan which we may attribute to Charles the Bold is as vast as his ambition, and as vague as his conception. That which in his projects recalls the idea of feudalism is, that finding a struggle still going on in France between the King and the members of his family, and seeing that the powerful vassals were intent upon making independent and rival sovereignties out of the provinces, Charles the Bold, during a part of his reign, endeavoured to gain the support of these great French vassals so as to make use of them to divide the forces of the King, and to effect diversions against him. This, it may be said, was to make common cause with the feudal element, and to endeavour to prolong the existence of the rivals of royalty, which was menaced. Taking a still more superficial view, it may be said that Charles kept feudalism alive by continually running in search of adventures; by

contrasting his warlike tendencies, his gorgeous armaments, and the splendour of his court, with the bourgeois habits, the secret manœuvres, and the simple outward appearance of Louis XI.

But these are secondary considerations. That which stands out with greater relief when we review the actions and the thoughts of the last Duke of Burgundy is, that he was more ambitious than Charles V. or Louis XIV.; that he wished—perhaps not quite at the same moment, but at certain periods of his life, and at the price of extravagant efforts—to succeed Frederick III. as Emperor of Germany, to be King of Burgundy, the conqueror of France; and that he desired this with a passion as personal and as despotic as could have been conceived by even the most puissant sovereign of the most monarchical period. We may say that he was in advance of his age, not from what he effected, but from the nature of the attempts he made. This certainly is not to recall the feudal period.

We must, however, add, without exactly contradicting what is stated above, that it is by no means certain that Charles the Bold had any definite schemes: we have to guess or to infer them from his actions rather than profess to know them for certain. The greater part of what he did was so little prepared, and so ill combined, that we may well doubt whether he ever had any plans of operation traced out in a precise manner. Those who have devoted themselves to a profound study of

the history of this prince grant readily that many parts of his history are obscure, more especially those where the action of the man, or rather his tentative processes, were directed to distant schemes, were addressed to more than one interest, to more than one influence, or to more than one state, with the view to attract them to him, or again where he attacked them openly. After having studied what has been written on this subject in ancient and in more recent days, it is difficult to gain a clear idea of what he wished, or of the means he had devised to attain his object. It is easier to understand the policy of Louis XI, who appears so measured in his conduct, and so anxious to avoid scandal, than it is to explain completely the policy of his rival. The reason is obvious: putting aside the morality of his intentions, Louis XI. had a clearness of intellect and of purpose, whilst the conduct of the Duke of Burgundy was fantastic and uncertain.

Charles the Bold realized none of the projects for which history gives him credit. The resistance which Louis XI. offered to his rival consisted in watching and following him, in laying snares for him, in confirming in their evil intentions all such as were already ill-disposed. The policy of the King with regard to the Duke of Burgundy therefore was ever shifting; it was not always careful or prudent, but we may say of him what a great captain of our day said of the art of war: the

talent of Louis XI. consisted in committing fewer and smaller blunders than his adversary.

The two objects which were essential to the success of Charles the Bold were, first, to put himself, and to remain, on good terms with the league of the princes formed against Louis XI.; and, secondly, to contract a solid alliance with England against the French monarch. Neither one nor the other of these two conditions would appear to have been very difficult of attainment. It was clearly as much the object of the French princes as it was that of the Duke of Burgundy to seek an alliance against the King; an alliance with Burgundy offered them incomparable advantages; but it was never solidly confirmed. The Duke of Berry, the brother but nevertheless the enemy of Louis XI.—to whom the King gave in succession Normandy and Guienne, with a view to gain him over to his side—the Duke of Berry, who died in a manner so opportune, that the fair fame of the monarch was tarnished with a horrible suspicion, never remained attached to the Duke of Burgundy. The Duke of Brittany, in possession of a province remarkable for its importance, its antecedents, and its resources, with its English as well as its French tendencies, and which alone retained its independence long after all the great domains had been reunited to the crown—the Duke of Brittany even was not an ally on whom Charles could always depend. The Constable of Saint-Pol, connected with several of

the reigning sovereigns, was the owner of considerable domains on both banks of the Somme, a river whose course had been so long a subject of dispute between France and Burgundy. He was suspected by both combatants, and, constantly wavering between the two, was encouraged in his indecision by the peculiar position of his domains; yet even he never gave a solid support to the Duke of Burgundy, but ended by being the victim of his vacillating policy. The same may be said of the other members of the league. Louis XI. was not always fortunate in his efforts to neutralise their efforts or dissolve their union; occasionally only his intrigues were successful, whilst at other times his imprudent conduct entailed certain failure; but in the end he carried the day. Fortune more often favoured than hindered him in the steps which he took. He was more often cunning than deficient in skill and intelligence, whereas his adversary was almost always inattentive and carried away by his passion.

The assistance of England entered into the combinations of Charles the Bold, and was as essential as the alliance of the French princes to the aggressive position which he wished to assume with regard to the King of France. The circumstances attending the English alliance, which was the great aim both of France and of Burgundy, were most complicated in this reign. The dream of Charles the Bold was nothing less than the invasion of France;

the continuation or renewal, under his command, of the wars of Edward III. and of Henry V.; and the conclusion of a military alliance between England and Burgundy—an alliance of which he should be the author, and the army of which should be led by himself. The scheme, which he pursued with the greatest assiduity, was, in fact, to recommence, in the name of Burgundy, the invading policy of England—but England was to be his ally, and he was to be the general of the combined armies. The idea of an Anglo-Burgundian or Anglo-Flemish alliance with a view to war—an idea which Van Artevelde had cherished when he could dispose only of Flanders, and which Philip the Bold and John the Fearless, the chiefs of a party in France, could only entertain for a moment—this idea had presented itself to Philip the Good as a means of vengeance, and had led him into but one bad action, committed with the connivance of the Queen of France. This same idea, so long as the war continued between France and England, could not fail to arise in the mind of a Duke of Burgundy who was flushed with conquest, and openly in revolt against the French monarch. It could never have been one of those which guided the policy of Charles V, who had more to do in the south than in the north; nor was it open to Philip II, who found in the Reformation an obstacle between England and himself.

We may admit the existence of a scheme like this

in the mind of an ambitious prince. There was no reason why a warlike genius should not dream, for the united armies of England and of Burgundy, of one of those victories which England, unaided, had won, at a time when the Duke of Burgundy was fighting in the French ranks. Charles, it may be said, only had to recognise the facts that France was much stronger and more compact under Louis XI. than at the time when the battles of Crecy and of Agincourt were fought; that a solid alliance with England was difficult when the English throne was the subject of dispute between two branches of the same dynasty; lastly, that England would scarcely condescend to hold a secondary rank. There was no question, on the other hand, but that the King of France, although crooked in his policy, was patient, skilful, attentive, and full of resources; and it is obvious that for the conduct of a great war, a genius far-sighted and stedfast in purpose is of far more value than a passionate nature.

We must then with regard to the English alliance draw a distinction between the beginning and the end of the reign; between the epoch when the civil war in England armed Henry VI. against Edward IV, and the time when Henry VI. had been beaten, and had died in prison, under circumstances which have never yet been clearly explained. During the civil wars of England, the Duke of Burgundy was more inclined to an alliance with the House of York—Edward IV. being his brother-in-

law—while Louis XI. sided rather with the House of Lancaster. The alliance therefore on the part of the Duke and of the King was rather with the two English parties than with England itself, and, even in the preference of one party or the other, Charles the Bold manifested all his instinctive vacillation, while Louis XI. showed the calculated reserve which controlled his inclinations. Later, when the defeat and death of Henry VI. had put an end to the Wars of the Roses, Charles the Bold was in a position to contract a more complete alliance with Edward IV, who was then without a competitor for the throne. This league was concluded, but it lasted only a short time; it was neither solid nor had it important consequences. It did not last, because to insure a durable political tie between two contracting powers mutual confidence is required, and the capricious character and blind passions of the Duke of Burgundy were not calculated to inspire this feeling in his ally.

I have thus indicated, first, the gigantic nature of the projects of Charles the Bold; secondly, his incapacity to establish a community of interest between himself and the league of French princes; and, lastly, the incomplete and transitory nature of such success as attended his attempts at an English alliance. If we put together these three facts, it is easy to explain all the events of his reign—both those which impair the power of Burgundy, and those which profit the crown of France; we

shall then comprehend the successive incidents of the struggle, its progress, and its final issue.

The Duke of Burgundy failed in establishing in a durable manner either one or the other of the two alliances which were the essential conditions of success even for schemes less enormous than those which he entertained. It is this want of proportion between a conception which professes to be grand, and the means employed to insure its success, which marks the degree of historical importance that attaches to the reign of the last Burgundian prince. It has seldom been the fate of a conqueror to avow such pretensions and to take so little pains as to the means by which they could be realized. This is the prominent and distinctive character of this history. The idea was a grand one, and its execution was promptly attempted, but those attempts were marked by inexperience and want of ability. The distance between the design and its execution was immense.

It is unnecessary, when the object is only to describe the general results of the events of this reign, to detail the grievances which the Duke of Burgundy raised, and the complaints which he made against the King of France. These were only the pretexts, not the real motives, for the war, and as pretexts they were of very small importance. A prince of an ambitious nature like Charles the Bold conceives his plans for no other reason but to gratify his own passions. It is only afterwards, when his

passions have perverted and inflamed his mind, that he seeks for some justification in the real, or supposed, injuries he has received from his adversary. Charles the Bold unfolded before the eyes of the world a plan of conquest, the particular character of which was to become more comprehensive as its ultimate success was shown to be more difficult and less likely to be achieved. He wished first of all to invade the French territory, in order to take a great portion of it himself, or to share it with the league of the French princes and with England. In this he failed. Nevertheless, his chances of success had been good. He had led his army to the south of the Seine, and Montl'héry was almost a victory. He saw Louis XI. attempt to bring about a union with the princes, which the King found to be occasionally as full of difficulty as Charles himself found it. Charles vanquished the people of Liège, who were in rebellion against their bishop, and he forced his rival Louis, who was almost his prisoner, to march with him against a town which this same King of France had urged into rebellion. Charles, moreover, saw his ally, Edward IV, enter London in triumph, and dethrone Henry VI.

This was a happy phase for the projects of the Duke of Burgundy; but there were others less favourable. His violent character prevented him from profiting by favourable circumstances, and did not help him to avoid the consequences arising from the want of success. He had not the sense to avail

himself of his good fortune to inspire Edward IV. with any confidence, and thus establish with him the conditions of a reasonable and durable alliance. Edward IV. had personally far greater desire and better cause to ally himself with Charles the Bold than to sign, as he did, a definitive treaty of peace with France.[1] One thing only was essential to this alliance, a conviction on the part of the King of England that the Duke of Burgundy would remain faithful to the alliance, not only in intent, but in his acts. This state of things seemed so probable that Louis XI. believed firmly in it, and felt serious alarm on that account.

The conduct of Louis XI. with reference both to England and to Burgundy was almost invariably governed by the conviction that the chances of Charles were better, and that his difficulties were less, than those of the Government in France. This conviction increased his natural circumspection. In the opinion of the King of France, the Duke of Burgundy was more free in his action; he could manage his own affairs with greater independence, and he was less hampered by inevitable hindrances. Had he not gone in search of enemies, he need have found none. The King of France was not likely, from his character, to have caused him any uneasiness as to the possession of his hereditary states. The difficulties inherent in the government of home affairs were not great in Burgundy. The

[1] Treaty of Pecquigny on the Somme.

King of France, on the contrary, especially since the fall of the Lancastrian party in England, had to dread at one and the same time, an attack from England—being at open war with that country—the league of the French princes, and the uncontrollable ambition of his neighbour in Burgundy.

In short, Louis XI. succeeded in escaping from his dangers by trusting to his ability more frequently than to his strength. Charles the Bold, after having nearly succeeded in taking Paris, ended by failing, under the walls of Beauvais, in his projects for the conquest of France. At length he wrecked his power, not against his most formidable adversary, but in a combat with the brave Swiss nation and its small army. Three times in succession his exhausted troops were beaten by an enemy whom he had no intention of provoking; but whom Louis, by the means of intrigues, which are most complicated and difficult to follow, had raised up against him to occupy and draw off his attention.

The contest was between violence and cunning, between passion and coolness, between overweening ambition and calculating prudence. We have already said that the desire of enlarging his possessions became more intense with Charles the Bold, in proportion as his attempts met with greater obstacles. He first of all tried to conquer Louis XI. by invading his kingdom. Subsequently he carried the war into Germany; he caused Alsace to rise against his rule, and made a bitter enemy of

Switzerland. Foiled by the obstacles which his direct aggression against France encountered, he was taken by a project still more vast and hazardous. The want of success, instead of teaching him moderation, made him the more enterprising. After having met the Emperor Frederick III. at Trêves, and after having tried to induce the Emperor to adopt and recommend him as his successor on the imperial throne, he wished to push his conquests so far into Germany as to possess a continuous territory which should stretch from the source of the Rhine to its mouth, from the Alps to Holland, which should unite Luxemburg to Franche-Comté by Lorraine, and which should outflank and menace France on all her eastern frontier. His aim was to form a great kingdom of Burgundy, which would have embraced a vast stretch of territory without depth, and would have had a large population without any national unity. He proposed to himself, by strengthening and drawing closer the bonds of the English alliance, to invade France from Germany and from the coast, and to lead his armies and those of England as far as fortune would permit, until he might crush the French monarchy between the two invading parties.[1]

The events of the war in Germany and in Switzerland are well known: the siege of Neuss

[1] See the work of vast research by Mr. Foster Kirke, *History of Charles the Bold.* 2 vols. London, 1863. The third volume has not yet appeared. Also the *Edinburgh Review*, April 1864.

obstinately prolonged like that of Beauvais, and with as little success—a siege in which the Burgundian army suffered terribly—the taking of Yverdun and of Granson ;—the battles of Héricourt, of Granson, of Morat, and of Nancy—four crushing defeats, of which the last terminated the war, the life, and the dynasty of the Duke of Burgundy. Charles the Bold was only forty-four years old when he died.

The fall of the Burgundian dynasty nearly coincides with the Peace of Pecquigny, concluded between Edward IV. and Louis XI.; in which treaty he allowed himself to be called the Prince Louis of France. It coincides also with the termination of the Anglo-French wars, and with the beginning of a new era in which the crown of France was destined to dispose more freely of the power of the country, and to carry the war into a different direction from that which it had followed for the space of four hundred years. In the estimation of the people of that day, the Peace of Pecquigny had no more importance than many other incidents of the reign of Louis XI. But taking history as a whole, the Peace of Pecquigny stands out in great relief when compared with previous or succeeding events. Above all the reasons which tempted Edward IV. to avoid or close the war with France—besides the distrust with which he viewed the petulance of Charles the Bold—besides the promptings of his own natural indolence and the uneasiness which Louis's

reputation for cunning, prudence, and activity caused him; we must mention a cause far stronger and more general—the irresistible tendency of the events of that period. The war with England was coming to an end; the same may be said of the civil war in France; and the existence of the Burgundian state was drawing to a close. It was the destiny forced upon Louis XI. to put an end to the period of feudal wars, which for a century had taken the form of family quarrels; it was the destiny of Edward IV. to put an end to the war, which had lasted for four centuries, with France; and it was the destiny of Charles the Bold to destroy by chimerical enterprises the existence of Burgundy as an independent and powerful state. That period in history during which the kingdoms of the West had to contend with rivals at home was everywhere dying out. The faults of some, the sagacity or good fortune of others, would appear, at first sight, to determine the moment of these changes. The good or bad qualities of the chief actors do, in fact, fill a part and occupy a place in these transactions: but it is chiefly at those decisive epochs when great historical changes take place, when one chapter of the history of the world is closed, and when another begins,—it is chiefly then that the action of events carries people away, and that, however strong or able they may be, they are forced to follow the current. "Leave him alone," said Comines to Louis XI. when he saw his former

master embark in foolhardy enterprises: and this advice of Comines, dictated by an excellent and profound judgment, contained, far more than he was perhaps aware of, a general and philosophical appreciation of the state of affairs then existing.

The career of Charles the Bold was short; violent things have a violent end. At the age of eighteen he showed the germ of fine qualities; he respected his father, and knew how to restrain himself in his presence: he had a taste for serious occupations, and he worked as if he had to earn his daily bread; but very soon that which had been energy became passion and brutality. His tastes degenerated into defects, his vivacity became anger, his severity towards himself turned into severity to others. His heart swelled within him; he was enamoured of his own ideas, believed in nothing but his own good fortune; he became obstinate and uncontrollable, alienated the public sympathy, even that of his own soldiers, which was so important to his success, and in his universal distrust he repelled all devotion to his interests which did not take the form of silent and respectful obedience to his will.

Possessing a mind that was essentially full of idle fancies and confused, he imagined that heroism consisted in projecting with ardour vast schemes. He was excited at the prospect of an enterprise, but he lacked patience, moderation, purpose, attention to details, all, in short, which renders practicable things difficult in themselves. Having sworn to

change the face of Europe, he gave to ideas, which should have been precise, the indistinct outline of figures seen in a dream; in those who might have been most useful he would only see mere agents, who were bound to bend and submit to his wishes. He deprived himself, for instance, of an instrument like Comines, one of the shrewdest and most enlightened minds of his time; he tired him out by his impatience and his caprices, and made him prefer the tricks and the duplicity of Louis XI.[1] He imagined himself to be the genius by which conquests are made, although he had only the temperament which covets them. He was like a runaway horse, galloping straight ahead, beyond the control of the bit, which he no longer feels, heedless of the obstacles in front, and of the subsequent exhaustion. When he was generous it was without kindliness; he was totally devoid of affectionate sentiments on his own part, and indifferent whether he inspired them in others. We may say that when fortune, after having favoured him for a time, at last abandoned him, there was not one to regret him, even among those whom duty, position, or love of adventure had associated with his lot in life.

At his death, freed from an enemy formidable from his audacity, Louis XI, having made peace with England, took possession of that portion

[1] See in the *Mémoires de Comincs* the simple and brief manner in which he speaks of his leaving the service of the Duke for that of the King.

of Burgundy which he maintained he was entitled to claim by the custom or ancient law of France, as a male appanage of the crown.[1] But he did not attempt to turn the weakness of the government of the Duchess Mary of Burgundy, or, later still, the unpopularity of her husband the Archduke Maximilian, to further account in the gratification of his ambitious views: he did not threaten them in the centre of their states:—this was not the sort of risk he liked to run. Historians have given in great detail the account of his latter years, of his long and singular illness, and of his great sufferings, occasionally relieved by a return of health; they have told us how he was subject to great bodily weakness, to childish terrors, and to incredible fancies; nevertheless the clearness of his intellect remained unimpared. He left France greater, stronger, and more tranquil than the kingdom had been at the accession of his grandfather Charles V.

Louis XI, who died detested, made it his personal and settled ambition to save the country from the evils which it had endured during the first half of the century; and the expression of public satisfaction which was manifested when he died, proves that the people attributed his efforts solely to the instinct of his personal interests. It was generally

[1] The question whether the law authorized Louis XI. to claim, as reverting to the crown, the Duchy of Burgundy, is one of the moot points in history. This question was brought forward several times during the wars and the negotiations between Charles V. and Francis I.

remembered that, if he had been useful to France, he invariably reserved to himself some advantage or some profit, and the memory of the services he had actually rendered was thus weakened. The people are less grateful when the good effects which they perceive, are in some way indirect, and when they begin by benefiting those who brought about the change.[1]

VII.

THE House of Burgundy ought not thus to have ended its career ; and the rulers of that powerful state might have played a different part, and have left behind them more permanent traces. They possessed that which no potentate in their immediate neighbourhood had,—a crown to which there were no pretenders, and a country rich in its soil and in its industry, in which the popular movements, so formidable in preceding ages, caused but trifling embarrassment during that century. The Burgundian princes possessed great personal riches, whilst they had abundant resources in the taxation of the people. The geographical position, and the importance of their state, above all, the domestic troubles of neighbouring kingdoms, ought to have given them a very great influence. Why was it that Philip the Bold and John the Fearless, who both

[1] *Chronique de Jean de Troyes.* Second Part, year 1476.

enjoyed such great advantages, to whom the direction of public affairs in France during the long reign of Charles VI. so naturally fell—who moreover had their own army, their own finances, and their own throne—why was it that they did not succeed, as princes of the royal blood, in putting down the civil war and the rival parties, and in restraining the other princes, who had no greater claim to govern the country, and far less means of efficient action? Why was it that Philip the Bold allowed this power in France to be wrested from his hands without resistance? Why was it that John the Fearless, the assassin of his cousin, should himself die from the blow of a battle-axe, and should leave as a legacy to his descendants a murder to be avenged? The two last dukes lived at a time which was very different from the epoch which ended at the bridge of Montereau. Philip the Good indeed added largely to his possessions, and raised his own position; and Charles the Bold, although the rash author of his own fall, at least made himself remarkable by the grandeur of the struggle in which he was engaged, and by the catastrophe of his death. But Philip the Good, instead of being, as he might have been, an arbitrator of real weight during the last Anglo-French war, oscillated between the two alliances. He thus failed in strengthening his position, by choosing one of the two, or in making himself more powerful, by taking an independent and authoritative part between the

combatants. Charles the Bold, vacillating and exaggerated in his ideas, saw neither the value of peace to a powerful prince, nor the importance of a great alliance if he intended to wage war, nor yet the difficulty of a vast conquest—and accordingly he died, after reigning a few years, ruined and undone. The House of Burgundy only appeared for a short time on the scene. In other hands, had its existence been longer, and had it remained what it was, neither German nor French—yet after the termination of the English wars placed as it was between France and Germany, between Francis I. and Charles V, Burgundy might have played a great part in politics, and might have altered the destinies of Europe during the sixteenth century.

We have attributed the disappearance of Burgundy as a state from the map of Europe, and its absorption into other kingdoms, chiefly to the want of ability and of prudent forethought in the Dukes of Burgundy. This was the chief of the causes that worked their destruction. The three first dukes must bear their share of the blame. As to Charles the Bold, the commonest prudence ought to have led him, on the failure of a male heir, and before risking his existence in perilous adventures, to secure a protector for his daughter by marriage. If, instead of compromising his power in hazardous enterprises, he had transmitted to his daughter a sovereignty, intact, at peace with its neighbours, and well governed, the

danger of seeing one-half of it absorbed by France would have been much lessened. Charles the Bold had every chance of surviving Louis XI.; his health was more robust than his rival's, and he was his junior by ten years. Charles VIII. the successor of Louis XI. had neither the wish nor the power to take the duchy of Burgundy. In short, may we not maintain, with great plausibility, that, in later years, this dominion, forming a part of the inheritance of Charles V, would probably have been constituted by him a kingdom of Burgundy or of Belgian Gaul? We shall soon see that Charles V. made great efforts to recover the duchy of Burgundy from Francis I.; and on the other hand, that the creation of an independent and considerable state to the north of France, separate from the rest of his possessions, was the dream of a great part of his life. This idea would have suggested itself to him with greater reason had the duchy of Burgundy still formed a portion of his dominions. We have the more reason for this surmise, because Charles V. during the latter years of his life, established with care, and in a distinct manner, the relations of the circle of Burgundy with the German Empire.

We have already said that the fifteenth century marks the transition between feudalism and monarchy. The separation from the middle ages was most distinct. Feudalism, chivalry, the crusades, the communes, existed in France only as a memory of the past. In England, the struggle between

the Normans and the Saxons, and between the great Norman barons and the crown, had gradually died out. The wars of the English on the French soil, owing to new complications, had reached its last stage. On the other hand, the power of the middle class was decreasing in the provinces which border France on the northern frontier. But if all these features of the middle ages disappear in the countries—we will include England in the list—which lie between the Rhine and the Atlantic, the characteristics of the modern world have not yet appeared. Monarchy under Charles VII. had not yet put forth its strength and its fulness; its military character was not yet formed; respect for the throne as a principle, obedience to the monarch as a habit, were not yet enthroned in the hearts of the people. The feudal rivalries had ceased, but these were replaced by rivalries between families. This precarious condition, this incomplete and unsettled state of the monarchical element, had its origin in various circumstances. The independence of the royal power was recent; it had just ended a long war with the feudal power, in which the monarch had come out victorious. The crown had not yet had time to consolidate its power. Moreover, the principle of hereditary succession in the male line, the principle of the Salic Law, was not yet authoritatively recognised in France. It was proclaimed by those who had an interest in enforcing its acceptance; but it was neither a regular practice,

nor did it receive unanimous assent. Thus the hereditary title of the House of Valois was contested by the English royal family, who claimed through females. Lastly, during the fifteenth century, the throne was long occupied in France, and too long in England, by men whose feeble faculties or enervated character, very far from supplying the strength which was wanting in the throne itself, added greatly to its weakness and its embarrassment.

These are some of the reasons which make the fifteenth century an epoch of transition in England and in France. The power of the French crown, incapable as it was, during the greater part of the century, of itself guiding public affairs, was delivered over successively into the hands of rival parties. By the creation of appanages for the benefit of the princes of the family, the royal power itself encouraged civil war between near connexions. On the other hand, the English monarchy, disputed by different branches of the same race, was destroyed by internal struggles, and the chain of the hereditary succession was broken by war and by murder. The Wars of the Roses were sufficiently bloody to furnish Shakespeare with subjects for the drama quite as tragic as Hamlet or Lear.

The end of the House of Burgundy coincides very nearly with the epoch when history takes its leave of the middle ages—when, once for all, feudal monarchy had ceased, and given way to the independent form of monarchy of modern times, to

large armies, to governments powerful in themselves—when war changed its character and its theatre, and, after having been carried on for centuries between England and France on the shores of the Channel, was transported, also for centuries, to the banks of the Rhine, and to the country south of the Alps. It was towards the close of the fifteenth century that this change took place in Europe, and that this point of intersection occurs.

Charles VIII. was almost a child when his father died, and was still very young when, founding his pretensions on the will of René of Anjou, he undertook the conquest of Naples. He entered without striking a blow, but could not retain his hold on what he had seized. But the war from that moment followed a new direction, and only occurred at intervals in the north of France. The question whether Naples should belong to the French of the House of Anjou, or to the Spaniards of the House of Arragon, was not solved so quickly. The campaign of Charles VIII. is the starting point of a military era which no longer forms, like the wars with England, a part of the middle ages: it belongs to a series of centuries which form the domain of modern history.

II.

CHARLES V.

I.

At the end of the fifteenth century, after the death of Louis XI. and of Richard III, at the accession of Ferdinand the Catholic, the monarchical element increased in power in France, in England, and in Spain, and territorial unity was everywhere triumphant. The sovereigns of these three countries, whose shores are washed by the Atlantic, had no longer to struggle for the possession or recovery of the territory which, in the end, had constituted their domain, and which could thenceforth be designated under one name. They had no longer to struggle for the independence of their crown. Unity and territorial contiguity were accomplished. Feudal wars, and civil war among the great families having pretensions to the throne, and the long war between France and England, had successively died out, after having borrowed their character from that of royalty itself, and after having gradually spread from the castle to

the province, and from the province to the whole kingdom, precisely as the royal power had increased in moral force and had acquired more territorial development.

Henceforth the King of France was strong enough no longer to fear rebellious vassals, as in the old days of the middle ages; nor jealous relations, as in the fifteenth century; nor the invasion of his land by the English, who had menaced and troubled his kingdom during four hundred years. He was Lord of all France, excepting Brittany, which would soon be united to the crown by marriage. In England the ideas of invading France were but passing caprices. Henry VIII. in his wildest dreams or passions never seriously thought of retaking the French provinces formerly possessed by the Plantagenets.

The King of England was equally delivered from the family rivalries which had desolated the country, and given a destiny so tragic and variable to the crown of Great Britain. He had reconciled and put an end to rival ambitions, by uniting in his person the two Houses of York and Lancaster.

The unity of Spain had been obtained by victories and a marriage; and Ferdinand, in possession of the whole peninsula, had only to deal with temporary revolts or discontent among the commons, the nobles, or the Moors.

Such, at the end of the fifteenth century, was the new condition of the royal power in the three

countries which form the maritime frontier in the west of Europe. The royal power was then established in an independent manner; it had put down feudal rivalries and family pretensions; and all questions as to hereditary rights had been solved.

This result was the work of several centuries. Monarchical power in France and in Spain had made regular and constant progress; it had met with many obstacles, and had combated many enemies; it had triumphed over the power and the superior number of its rivals, and it had surmounted all the difficulties caused by the original weakness of its means, and the want of skill, or the feebleness of its representatives. The institution had proved too powerful to allow of its being beaten by the audacity or obstinacy of its enemies, or by the want of ability, or the misfortunes of its defenders.

But all human affairs are subject to a law of continual movement. When monarchy in the west of Europe became possessed of an independent power, and of an undivided and undisputed territory, it did not remain stationary, but we shall see it continue its onward march. The liberation of the country and the unfettered disposal of supreme power were not enough: there was the further object of conquest and external aggrandizement. This is the task to which monarchs in modern times have devoted themselves, and this process commenced in the sixteenth century. The Anglo-French wars, which ceased with Louis XI. and Edward IV, did

not profess to have conquest for their object; the English sovereigns claimed to be the legitimate heirs to the throne of France, and maintained that in sending armies to the continent they were only urging their just claims.

The wars of the sixteenth century, even when undertaken under the pretence of hereditary rights, made use of those rights only as a pretext. The sole and evident object of these wars was European supremacy and conquest. They might have been made for territories to which the belligerent parties had hereditary pretensions, but those territories were often situated far from their own kingdoms. Thus when Charles VIII. invaded the kingdom of Naples, and when the King of Spain invaded the Milanese, most assuredly these were wars for conquest; the object was to gain possession of territories not their own, and at a considerable distance from their own hereditary states.

Such was the altered aspect of events during the sixteenth century—more particularly during the first fifty years, and during the latter years of the fifteenth century. The character itself of politics and of war had changed in the states of the West. War became more general; politics embraced a larger field. As the power of the monarch increased, military operations were conducted on a more extended scale. After conquering the provinces which were contiguous, and which gave unity to their kingdoms, kings sought to acquire new territory by

distant foreign enterprises. The monarchs of the sixteenth century, who fought when they were enemies, now met together, came to an understanding one with the other, and entered into mutual alliances, more often than did their predecessors. The nations of Europe mixed more together, and learnt to know each other better. The idea of the balance of power arose, the system of alliances between states began, and the action of one power on the destiny of others made itself felt; there sprung up too a mass of general interests which brought these various nations into contact, and which formed a new element of international influences in the world. The history of the sixteenth century, therefore, differs greatly from that of the preceding century. The governments in their warlike or pacific relations with regard to foreign matters were guided by notions and by views bought by recent experience, which had been completely unknown to the most enlightened politicians of former times. The history of France, of England, of Spain, and of Germany in the sixteenth century can no longer be written separately; it becomes the history of Europe.

These ideas, however, from the very fact of their having only recently arisen in the mind of the governing classes, had not yet acquired the stability and the solidity they assumed in epochs more nearly approaching our own. Political science, in a modern sense, began at this period, but nothing could be

more fleeting or undecided than its guiding principles. It had just struggled into existence, and began to feel its way in a hesitating manner. It has sometimes been said that the basis of the history of the sixteenth century is to be found in the claims which were made by monarchs, rivals in power, upon those countries or provinces which had remained neuter between the Protestantism of the North and the Catholicism of the South. In attributing so decided an object to the policy pursued at the beginning of the sixteenth century, we give too much honour, if we may be permitted to use such an expression, to those who were supposed to guide it. No one of them had, as far as we know, such profound and clear ideas with regard to the Reformation. None among them knew with sufficient clearness what they desired with respect to the new belief, still less what was to be done in order to attain the end they had in view. The action of governments had become more extensive, and the field of politics more vast, but the course of every one concerned was without plan or principle. Certain alliances among the states of that day seem to us, at the present time, as if they were clearly marked out, and ready to take a substantive form of their own accord. Nevertheless we see that those who should have contracted these alliances neglected their opportunities, and, in lieu of endeavouring to make allies, raised against themselves enemies. The strongest characters hesitated: a cause taken

up one day was abandoned on the morrow. As a general rule, all sciences are slow in attaining complete development and perfection, and the science of modern politics was then quite in its infancy. The greater portion of the ideas which afterwards acquired the authority of principles in the minds of Henry IV. and of Cardinal Richelieu, in the minds of De Witt and of William III, and even in that of Elizabeth, were but vaguely and imperfectly understood even by the highest intelligences which governed Europe during the lifetime of Charles V. and at the commencement of the Reformation.

When Protestantism is represented, as has sometimes been done, as the cause which guided the policy and determined the principal events of the sixteenth century, we are apt to confound the latter half of the century with the first,—the end with the beginning. It was necessary that the Reformation should give the measure of its force, that it should make known the nature of its action, that it should trace more or less distinctly its geographical limits, and enable the world to judge which of the religious sects would acquire the most moral power and have the largest number of followers, before those who guided the policy of the age could come to any resolution, and assign their respective parts to those who, from political motives and from temporal interests, ought to combat the new doctrine as an evil, and those who ought to use it as an ally. In

the second half of the sixteenth century, Philip II. was the declared enemy of the Reformation, and Elizabeth was its protectress, while, in the seventeenth century, Cardinal Richelieu was its ally. Time, experience, the development, both spiritual and material, of the Reformation, were necessary conditions, before this distribution of parts in the great drama of politics could be made among the different powers; before the Reformation could be enrolled under the flag of one party and repudiated by the other;—in short, before it could take a place and a colour of its own in the political and military affairs of Europe.

At the beginning of the century, this decided participation of the reformed religion as a vital element in public affairs, this clear demarcation of its strength and of its limits, had not yet been attained. The sovereigns of Europe feared the Reformation: the feeling was universal; but danger can be combated by force or warded off by alliances. In this case every one was hesitating, as if in the presence of some unknown object. The Reformation was in its infancy: even the very authors who gave their names to its different sects did not know how far they meant to push their innovations,—what to keep or what to change of the old dogma,—to what measures or to what human assistance they were to appeal in order to insure success. That which the reformers did not perceive, the chiefs of the European governments knew still less. Some among them,

even down almost to the middle of the century, did not clearly understand either the spirit of the new doctrine, or the movements of their own consciences in the presence of a change of faith so loudly proclaimed, nor did they see the manner in which their different interests in the world might be affected. It was only in the latter years of the reign of Charles V, after long and vague discussions of principles, that lutheranism became the cause of war between him and the protestant princes. No government knew, until that time, what was to be expected or feared from the Reformation, or how to deal with it. The general policy of the epoch, as we have before said, was undecided. It showed how deficient the men of that day were in the habit of directing affairs when they became of European importance, or of treating politically, not with a rebellious party, or with a single adversary, but with Europe as a whole. This want of decision shows itself particularly in their conduct towards the Reformation. It troubled and alarmed them : it convinced them that it was so grave a matter as to deserve their most serious attention. Before the middle of this century the Reformation had not only made no proselytes, but it had neither resolute nor determined adversaries, nor any interested defenders, among the great monarchs.

It was therefore not the great event which stands out prominently in the history of the first half of the sixteenth century.

Quite another matter occupied the first place in the events of that time, affected the most important resolutions of sovereigns, and influenced the whole of European history. This was the Italian war between Spain and France, which was a struggle of the two powers for supremacy, ending in the subjugation of Italy by Spain.

The history of that epoch is the history of this contest between Spain and France—Spain with all her dependencies—and the principal object of the conflict was Italy.

Here, let us remark, there was no question as to the object coveted by both parties, and it could not have been otherwise; but the object only was determined; while the policy by which it was to be attained was vacillating. Policy is more often irresolute in the measures which it takes than in the object which it seeks; the choice of the latter is generally determined by circumstances, whereas the former depend on the character and the abilities of men. During the first half of the sixteenth century, those who conducted the general policy showed great indecision in the means which they employed, in the alliances which they formed, in the action of their Governments, and in their appreciation of the gravest events. The men who guided that policy were novices in the science they attempted to practise.

In the sixteenth century Italy lost the liberty which she had enjoyed for two hundred years, and

which had already begun to diminish in the fifteenth century. Although more advanced than Spain and the centre of Europe in most things, Italy was less military. The territory was divided into small states, not one of which was capable of resisting singly any great power; it was composed partly of small and badly governed principalities, or of republics which, —with the single exception of Venice,—were either enfeebled by perpetual dissensions, or, like Florence, were distracted by the dissensions between the republicans, who wanted to be free, and some family of ancient popular magistrates, who wished to become dictators;--Italy, thus constituted, could with difficulty defend itself with energy against the invasion of a foreign army. The House of Arragon reigned at Naples; while the King of France, as head of the House of Anjou, asserted his claim to be more legitimate than that of the Spaniard. But it was far more difficult for the French monarch to lead his soldiers across the Alps and the whole peninsula so as to seize Naples, and establish himself there, than for the King of Spain to defend his possessions. Nevertheless, it did not fall out so: the Spanish rule was most unpopular with the Neapolitans, and the King of France made use of this unpopularity of the Arragonese as a weapon of offence second only to his hereditary title. Passing through Milan, Florence, and Rome, Charles VIII. made a rapid dash at Naples, which put him in possession of the kingdom. Unfortunately, Charles VIII. was a poor

deformed, dissipated, and insignificant creature. Pope Alexander VI. said: "The King of France took Italy with a piece of chalk, much as a quartermaster chalks out billets for his troops." His conquest so embarrassed him, his military improvidence was so great,—the Italians, who, from jealousy of the Spaniards, had encouraged his enterprise, became rapidly so jealous of the French,—that in spite of the difficulties of his retreat, he hastened his return to France; leaving Naples under the charge of a garrison which was too weak to defend it, and which soon allowed Spain to resume its ancient possession.

This first expedition was a bad presage for those that followed, and for the future prospects of liberty in Italy. During the whole course of the Italian wars of the sixteenth century, there was a vague belief, even among the people themselves, that with Spain they had everything to lose. The French kings invariably announced themselves as the friends of independence beyond the Alps, and as the defenders of Italy against the Spaniards. This promise was not sufficient, nor did it succeed. Liberty succumbed with the French cause in Italy; Savonarola perished in the flames, and the Spanish viceroys maintained their rule.

In order to secure in Italy the part she meant to play, France should on her side have attempted to inspire unanimous and well grounded sympathy. She should have allied herself with Venice, which, in

a higher degree than any other Italian states, possessed material resources, and an enlightened government. But that republic was for a short time only the ally of France; and her other alliances were not more lasting. The Duke of Milan, a soldier of fortune, the illegitimate heir or rather the usurper of the Viscontis, invoked the aid of the King of France, and then deserted him. The republican population of Florence would gladly have received the aid of France, but the Medicis feared it; for the Medicis and the Florentines were not then of the same mind. The Holy See, a sovereignty which frequently changes hands, was occupied in the sixteenth century by pontiffs of the most opposite character: Alexander VI. was vicious and immoral like all his family; Julian II. was intent only on war; Leo X. was a scholar and magnificent, but he bestowed only secondary attention on affairs of state; Clement VII. was enlightened and active, but he was above all one of the Medicis, and a Florentine. When we observe the political bias of the men who then wore the tiara, it is not difficult to understand the instability of their alliances, and the small amount of temporal assistance they could offer to France, or to any other power. Julius II, the pontiff who exercised most influence on the fortunes of Italy at that time, acted invariably for his own interests, either with or against Venice, with or against France or Spain. The manner in which Italy was constituted and governed therefore gave no hope

of a common action, or of a persevering system in favour of any particular interest.[1]

Moreover, the nature of the governments, whether they were republican or otherwise, was not favourable to the development of any ideas of national independence. The minority everywere absorbed the masses. The habit of liberty had been lost for some time, and its very spirit had perished. The ideas of freedom no longer existed save in a small number of minds. In the Italian principalities and republics, unless indeed the system of government had been changed, any step towards a higher state of morality could profit only a very small body of interested people.

The result, therefore, of the wars waged by France is not astonishing. She did not attempt to contract the alliances which would have been most useful to herself, nor did she try to secure to her allies that which would have been most important to them. The French policy beyond the Alps was changeable; it did not succeed in strongly attaching either Venice, or Florence, or the Pope, who were its natural allies, to its interest; and the Italians did not do for themselves that which France failed to accomplish for them.

Louis XII, unlike as he was to Charles VIII, had the same fate in Italy as his predecessor. At his death, France did not possess an inch of ground in Italy.

[1] Ranke, *History of the Popes in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.*

With Louis XII, Maximilian, Ferdinand the Catholic, Henry VIII, and Julius II, and with Venice and Florence all engaged in the struggle—with the wars carried on by France in Italy against Spain and her allies, in Burgundy against the Swiss, and in Picardy against England—the spectacle is not so magnificent as when Francis I. and Charles V. appear on the stage But the scene was already beginning to be complicated in a manner both remarkable and novel. The movement which was made embraced the whole of Western Europe; at the same moment, France, the Empire, Spain, England, the Pope, Switzerland, Venice, and all the Italian states were equally involved in war or diplomacy. The confusion of interests and of ambitions was all the greater from the very novelty of the situation; no such complication had ever before existed; and, consequently, all concerned were embarrassed and undecided, and the resolutions they adopted were as changeable as were the alliances or the enmities which sprung up.

We may ask, what could Louis XII. do, and what did he really desire?

His chief objects were to possess the Milanese as the heir of the House of Orleans, to exercise influence at Naples, and to guarantee the independence of the centre of the Peninsula. To accomplish these objects, the most natural and useful allies were first Venice, rich and powerful, forming a barrier against Germany; secondly, the Pope,

placed in the centre of Italy, and the natural defender of the independence of that part of the country; and, thirdly, England as a diversion and make-weight against Spain. But, instead of forming these alliances, Louis XII. was at war, either successively or at the same time, with Venice, with Julius II, and with Henry VIII.

Why was it that a European League was formed against Venice, called the "League of Cambrai," in which France joined? Because kings are always jealous of republics; because France and Spain both dreaded the influence of Venice in Italy; because Cardinal Amboise, with his great ideas, was also subject to caprices; because Venice had conquered on the mainland considerable territories which had once belonged to the Empire, to the Pope, or to Spain; and because France failed to see that she would thus lose a possible and useful ally, while she would gain nothing by it.

The League of Cambrai was an absurd idea, a vast project without any reasonable foundation, and it therefore could not last. It was abandoned almost directly by Julius II, who had been its chief promoter; it encountered the firm and valiant resistance of the Venetians; it was soon abandoned by Spain; it was forgotten and lost sight of by the indifference of Maximilian. Thus in the end the League was turned against Louis XII, the blindest of its authors, who found that he had to oppose, on each of his frontiers, one of those very associates whom he had

selected for an enterprise which offered nothing but disadvantage to France, without any counterbalancing chance of profit.

In order to comprehend the perpetual changes which took place in the system of European alliances during these events, we must bear in mind that, so soon as any one of the allied powers gained any advantage or preponderating influence, the others began to fear that power, and to turn against it. Thus, Julius II. wished in succession to embroil Spain and the Empire, after having brought them together; then he tried to unite them anew against France, and to league against France the Italian states; he also attempted to secure the friendship of Henry VIII. by holding out to him as a bait the ancient possessions of the English crown in France. Yet this Pope played a great part during the reign of Louis XII. In spite of the continual changes in his alliances, he was, perhaps, the only man of that time who kept his eyes steadily fixed on one object, —the development of the Roman power, and the independence of Central Italy. We may say that he abandoned the alliance of Venice, of France, and of Spain, so soon as he thought that those powers offered any impediment to the success of his Italian projects.

The other characters were very vacillating in their policy.

Louis XII. was an active-minded, steady, and just prince, animated with the desire of doing good;

but his character lacked depth and firmness; his judgment underwent the most various influences; his policy was deficient in logical consistency and greatness of purpose, and frequently failed in good faith.

Maximilian was restless, petulant, negligent, and prejudiced; he carried his love of mystery into the smallest actions; he was unfaithful to his engagements from absence of mind; he was giddy and thoughtless, boasting and full of chivalrous pretensions and chimerical projects; a spendthrift, he loved money, but never had any; he was capricious, but clever. He succeeded in nothing he undertook in Germany, and he was unpopular in Flanders; in short, he was without any of the great virtues.

The character of Henry VIII. is too well known to need repetition. Ambitious of military glory, changeable as the events themselves, as jealous of the continental sovereigns as he was of his wives, perpetually fearing the alliance between France and the Empire, he manifested in mature age the same pride in his vices, his superstitions, and his passions, that he had shown in his personal appearance during his younger days.

Politics might well be confused when they had to be dealt with by minds such as these.

Louis XII. was wrong to enter lightly into the League of Cambrai. He was wrong in making an agreement with Spain to divide the spoil of Naples with that country. Such a convention could not

last; Naples could not be partitioned, more especially with Spain, whose power was already so much more firmly established there. It was simply giving to Gonsalvo of Cordova the opportunity to defeat the French, and drive them out of the kingdom.

Louis XII. both gained and lost in the midst of this general confusion. He held Naples for a short time, and he retained the Milanese for ten years, but he kept neither. He left to his son-in-law, who was also his cousin, and his successor, only that which he had himself inherited from Charles VIII. Like his predecessor, he left the reputation of having in vain attempted to do glorious deeds; but he left besides the fame of having sincerely desired to accomplish what was useful; his intentions, however, were better than his success.

II.

At the death of Louis XII. and of Ferdinand the Catholic, Francis I. and Charles V, with the interval of one year between them, became respectively King of France, at the age of twenty-one, and King of Spain at that of sixteen. The war was then carried into Italy by these princes, and was brought to an end by a truce, without any benefit to either party. Francis I. found the state of affairs in Italy much the same as Charles VIII. had found it. Nothing had been done; for twenty

years had passed in fruitless struggles, and in sterile negotiations. The greater as well as the smaller powers of Europe had been fighting, negotiating, and breaking off their negotiations; they had mixed, consulted, and disputed one with another under the guidance of calculations which were worthless: they had been led by friendships and prejudices without motives; and by ambitious projects without any substantial policy. After centuries of local or little wars, the spirit of conquest on a large scale had passed over Europe, and men's minds were filled with a passion for extended political ideas. With the exception however of Julius II.—the one salient character of that epoch, who, through numberless shifts and changes, had remained constant to one idea—no one had entertained a serious and definite project. Venice was an exception, but she had not been able to regain all that she had lost by the League of Cambrai, while the territorial possessions of the other powers had remained much as they were. The ephemeral alliances which had been contracted and then broken had left no binding ties, and no traces. Julius II, Louis XII, and Ferdinand the Catholic were dead, and Maximilian was near his end. His marriage with Mary of Burgundy, and that of his son with Joan of Castille, had united in the same hands the inheritances of the houses of Austria, of Burgundy, and of Arragon. This great event, which prepared the way for others, was brought about by two marriages, and not by

war or politics, which had in fact produced no effect. The great powers had neither gained nor lost; while the ties they had formed with such inconceivable fickleness had been broken asunder, so that all the world was free. This first experience of war, and of a larger political action, with which the fifteenth century had closed, and with which the sixteenth century had opened—an experience made by men who were not confident in themselves—had been vain. The lesson had failed, and everything had to be begun afresh.

Francis I. and Charles V, on ascending their respective thrones, did not seem to know that they were destined to a life-long struggle. The first thing Francis did, before the accession of Charles, was to attack the Milanese, and to win the battle of Marignan. This did not prevent the two reigns from commencing with a treaty of peace signed at Noyon, by which Naples was assigned to Spain, and the Milanese to France, and which was followed, after the battle of Marignan, by three years of peace. Charles and Francis loved war for different reasons; the one loved it only as an exercise of the mind, and the other only as a sensual gratification. The equilibrium thus established in Italy gave satisfaction, for the Spaniards in the south, the French in the north, and the Pope in the centre protected the independence of the republics, and of the secondary states. So soon as the contest for Italy ceased, there was no necessity to continue it

for Navarre, always a cause of quarrel between France and Spain; nor yet for Burgundy, which Louis XI. had claimed as a fief—a claim, however, which was not acknowledged as legitimate or definitive by Spain;—nor was it worth while fighting for Guelderland, which aspired to be independent of Burgundy, and which leant for support on France; nor yet for the duchy of Bouillon, a troublesome and inconvenient neighbour to the Low Countries; nor even for the ancient mutual pretensions of France and Burgundy upon Picardy, or the territories on the Somme.

Charles and Francis, supposing them both animated by a spirit of moderation, could without much difficulty have managed to live at peace. Francis had not the desire, and he never had the intention, of depriving the descendants of the Dukes of Burgundy of their inheritance in the Low Countries, or of reigning at Brussels and occupying the mouth of the Scheld. It was a good saying of Ferdinand the Catholic, and one he frequently repeated, that the possessions of his grandson would be too vast, and that it would have been better had they been divided between Charles and his brother. Was he right? We doubt it. The dominions of the King of Spain were certainly larger, but the territory of the King of France was more compact, and his army was composed of more homogeneous materials;[1] indeed, had the King of France been

[1] Report of Michel Suriano.

long-sighted enough in his policy, he might have formed such alliances as would have compensated for any inequality there was between the monarch who reigned at Paris and the sovereign who held the hereditary possessions of Austria, Spain, the Low Countries, Naples, and the far countries beyond sea.

The Emperor Maximilian was not quite sixty when he died. Had he lived longer, affairs would doubtless have taken a different turn. One great object of rivalry, at any rate, would have been for a time removed—the contest for the Empire of Germany between Charles V. and Francis I. These two princes were rivals before the election for the empire, they were rivals after the election—a consequence of anger on the part of the beaten candidate, and of the disturbance of the balance of power between the two competitors. The choice of an emperor was, as is well known, difficult and complicated. Henry VIII. put himself forward as one of the candidates; the Elector of Saxony too, who had been invested with the administration of the Empire the day after Maximilian's death, had at one time some sort of chance. Francis I. committed, as far as his own interests were concerned, the great fault of miscalculating the probabilities of the election; he should have proposed immediately some German prince—for instance, the Elector of Saxony—as a candidate. As yet that prince was not pledged to the Reformation, and

he had considerable reputation and influence. Had the King of France supported some such candidate, Henry VIII. would soon have supported him ; and doubtless they would have had the sanction of the Pope, who dreaded for Italy the preponderance of the King of Spain, already the master of Naples. Among the Electors themselves, the three ecclesiastical members of the assembly,—the Electors of Mayence, of Cologne, and of Trêves, who were not actuated by personal ambition,—would have been well disposed towards a German prince ; and either the Elector Palatine or the Elector of Brandenburg would have carried the election,—supposing that the Elector of Saxony himself, which is improbable enough, had not given himself the benefit of his own vote, and that Brandenburg had remained hostile to him. The details relating to the election have been studied with great care ; nevertheless we can only form conjectures as to the possible success of one of the princes of the Empire. The agents of Charles and of Francis expended prodigious activity and a great deal of money—we may add, most unscrupulously—in their canvass for the election. After numerous changes in the dispositions of the Electors ; after complicated and pressing negotiations, conducted by clandestine or avowed agents ; after menaces of war, and a show of considerable warlike preparations, the Elector of Saxony—he whose successor afterwards carried on so bitter a war with the Emperor—and the Elector of Mayence

were the two who took the decisive steps, and brought the seven Electors to vote unanimously for Charles V. In short, the reasons which carried the day were, on the one side, the greater generosity, and the reputation for political skill, of Charles V, while on the other side there was the dread of the lust of conquest of Francis I, and the notion that he would less effectually defend Germany against the attacks of the Sultan.

The position of affairs had sensibly changed: the difference of the situation before and after the election was as marked as was the personal difference between Francis I. and Louis XII, between Charles V. and Maximilian, between Clement VII. (who was so soon to succeed after the short pontificate of Adrian VI.) and Leo X, whose death was imminent. Francis I, who in his dream of being Emperor of Germany had aspired to universal monarchy, including even the conquest of Constantinople, perceived that the chances of peace were gone. To leave his rival in the tranquil possession of such a power appeared to him impossible. Moreover, would he be able to retain possession of the Milanese without war? Charles indeed had signed the Treaty of Noyon, as King of Spain; but it was a question whether he would keep it as Emperor of Germany.

Francis I. viewed the difficulties of his position much as he was accustomed to view political affairs during his whole life; he displayed a giddiness, not

unmixed with generosity, and an immoderate love of glory, of action, and of war. The history of his reign teaches us that he would have gained less personal renown, but greater political security, had he endeavoured to maintain the balance of power. The dominions of the Emperor were undoubtedly more vast; but the difficulty of governing the various provinces, and of keeping up the government and the necessary troops, was infinitely greater. From this time forward France was compact and united, so as to possess the unrestrained and immediate disposition of all her strength. Francis I, moreover, could have found in the actual position of affairs resources and powerful help abroad. Henry VIII, who had accepted his hospitality at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and who both before and afterwards had also received that of the Emperor, could have played no part greater than that of arbitrator between the two chief monarchs of the continent,—an arbitrator showing somewhat more favour to the monarch, who of the two had fewer leagues of territory and fewer millions of subjects. The Pope—whether he were called Leo X, Adrian VI, or Clement VII.—would naturally have to fear the ascendency of the Emperor in Italy. The struggle between the Holy See and the Empire fills too many pages in the history of the Papacy to allow of its ever being forgotten. The situation of the Sovereign Pontiff may be viewed in two ways: as Head of the Church, he could place less reliance

on the King of France, than on the Emperor, the sworn opponent of the Reformation in Germany; as Head of an Italian state, the Pope had more to fear from the ascendency of Charles V. than from that of Francis I. It was therefore the Pope's interest to look for political support from the latter. In the rest of Europe it depended entirely upon the conduct of the King of France to conciliate all those whose interests caused them to look with mistrust on the Emperor, whether in Germany, in the North, or in Italy. He well knew the resources and the amount of support he might obtain, among the rest, from Denmark, Guelderland, Clèves, and all the other northern states; but he did not trouble himself about it. He looked upon the balance of power as overthrown. War came almost of itself. Lautrec led an army across the Alps, but, though successful at first, he was beaten at the Bicoque, and the series of reverses of the French monarch commenced.

Are we to attribute the celebrated treason of the Constable of Bourbon to the imprudence of the king, and to the manner in which he treated men, especially those most highly placed? Are we to treat this event, which was contemporaneous with all the greatest misfortunes of Francis, as one of his faults, and one of the principal causes of his disasters?

The Duke of Bourbon occupied a very peculiar position. He belonged to a branch of the royal

family; and in that he was, next to the King, the first personage of the kingdom, he possessed those qualities which altogether make a man either eminently useful or eminently dangerous. Intrepid, haughty, impetuous, powerful by his vast possessions, he had wished, like Francis I, to marry a daughter of Louis XII, and had almost rejected the hand of Louisa of Savoy, the mother of the King. He had a right to complain of great injustice, nay, of a slight; the command of the vanguard of the army had been given to Lautrec in preference to himself. Lautrec was a brave, but he was an unlucky general—a dangerous favourite —and the brother of the Countess of Châteaubriand. Moreover, Bourbon had to risk a suit with the crown for the main part of the property of his wife. There was fatal blindness in offending a man like the Duke of Bourbon, who was the representative and the only survivor of those princely houses which possessed appanages as collaterally connected with the crown, and which, under the race of Valois in the fifteenth century, had taken the place of the great feudal lords, and had almost held their own against royalty. Remaining as it were the only living example of a bygone time, Bourbon belonged to the past by his ideas, his possessions, and his indépendence. He felt himself too great to obey: had he married a daughter of France, he would have thought himself as near to the throne as the Count of Angoulême. Proud, and wounded in his

pride, he was out of place at the time he lived, and out of his element at court. He could not occupy a dependent position, and he was the more disposed to resent an affront, because he would have accepted a favour only with disdain, and would have felt that the very act of conferring it marked the distance between the master and the subject. In order to gratify his revenge and his self-love, he preferred to betray his sovereign, to serve another, to perjure himself, to lie, to feign illness, and to cross the frontier like a fugitive, rather than derogate from his dignity while he was serving his country and contributing to the grandeur of the French nation.

History seems frequently to forget how odious faults are, when they are, we will not say redeemed, but concealed, by the brilliancy of success, and the noisy tumult of events. The treachery of the Duke of Bourbon, owing to his great name, was talked of more than was warranted either by the length or the glory of his career. By deserting the flag of his own country, and offering his sword to Charles V. and to Henry VIII, he had the miserable satisfaction of flattering himself that he treated with those princes as if he was their equal.

It is only in appearance that the treason of the Constable of Bourbon is the point from which we can trace the formation of the great league against Francis I. We must attribute that combination much more to the position of Europe, to the fear which the ambition and the warlike spirit of Francis

I. inspired, to the desire of the Emperor to reconquer the Milanese, and to the interest which Cardinal Wolsey had in securing the protection of Charles V. as a means to raise himself to the Papacy. There were causes of war everywhere—in the evil feeling still caused by the election—in the pretensions of the Emperor on Burgundy,—pretensions he had by no means given up,—in the invasion of Navarre by Spain under Ferdinand—in the jealousy of Henry VIII. against Francis I.—in the disunion of Italy, and in the hope which was cherished by Francis I. as well as by Charles V. of bringing round to his party all those in Europe who had not yet entered into any formal engagements,—lastly, in the inevitable and natural rivalry between two men both actuated by ambitious views. Moreover such a cause was to be found above all in the evident and dangerous preponderance which the election to the Imperial throne gave to Charles V. The league embraced the Emperor, his brother Ferdinand, and the King of England; for the Pope and the republic of Venice wished to remain neuter. The Sovereign Pontiff had on the one hand to fear the preponderating influence of the Emperor, and on the other he had to avoid giving him cause of offence. Francis I. in opposing the league gave proof, not of a vast genius, but of great courage, and he thought himself sufficiently powerful to resist it. During one year indeed fortune was propitious to him; the English were repulsed on the Oise, and the Imperialists on

the frontiers of the Low Countries; Bourbon had besieged Marseilles without success; Henry VIII. had become cooler in his alliance with the Emperor; Wolsey was discontented; and the Low Countries, bowed down by taxes, were loud in their complaints. Had Francis taken advantage of all these circumstances; had he secured the friendship of the Pope, and of the other Italian states; had he turned to account the suspicions and ill-humour of Henry VIII. towards the Emperor, he might, with the assistance of the Emperor's enemies in Germany, have replaced France in a favourable position.

He neither listened to, nor profited by, the hints which fortune put in his way. He allowed the war in Italy to be mismanaged by his generals, and thus lost for the third time the conquests which France had already made in that country. Defended by the Pyrenees, trusting to the strong towns of Picardy, and to the neutrality guaranteed to Burgundy by the Treaty of Dijon, Francis was too confident in his good fortune and in his sword. Like a rash soldier, he went himself to Italy; he let slip an excellent opportunity of pursuing the Imperial forces, which were retreating before him; and by dividing his army, he showed a want of military prudence, so as to be beaten at Pavia by the Marquis of Pescara, and to be made prisoner by Charles de Lannoy.

As yet Charles V. had not appeared on the theatre of the war. His reputation was already

great, although hitherto his person, his talents, and his character were but little known. During the first years of his reign he divided his time between the Low Countries and Spain. He had neither visited Germany nor Italy: he acted from a distance, and he left the care of leading his soldiers to generals whose reputation did not overshadow his own. In reading history we meet with the name of Pescara, the victor of Pavia; but in the memory of after ages his name is confounded with that of many others; so that it does not shine like that of Bayard, who about the same time died sword in hand; nor even like that of Guise or Gonsalvo of Cordova.

Charles V. has far eclipsed the fame of all those who served him in a greater degree even than did either Francis I. or Henry IV. When the victory of Pavia was announced to him, he maintained that self-possession and tranquillity which enabled him in after years to say to his rival, "I am not the cause of your being a prisoner, but it is I who will order your release."

The details of the captivity of Francis I, who was soon transferred from Italy to Spain, have been collected in France by M. Aimé Champollion, and in Belgium by M. Gachard, who has published some remarkable essays on this subject.[1]

After an attentive study of the narratives and

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes* of 1 Feb., 1 and 15 March, 1866. *Rivalité de Charles V. et de François I*, by M. Mignet.

of the correspondence of those times, the conduct of Charles V. in this matter leaves an unfavourable impression on the mind. He had fought with Francis I. for the possession of Italy. While claiming for himself the recognition of his possessing rights over the north of Italy and over Naples, he might still have assumed the merit of great generosity, and by a slight favour have won over the enthusiastic heart of the French monarch. This idea never presented itself to his mind. He asked himself whether it was better to continue the war against France by prolonging the captivity of Francis, or to impose, as the condition of his release, the sacrifice of important portions of his dominions. His views were ambitious and vindictive; he had not in his heart one generous sentiment. The Emperor preferred exacting an unfavourable treaty to continuing the war, and in the first phase of the negotiations which were opened he claimed Burgundy, and demanded that the domains of the Duke of Bourbon should be independent of the crown of France, which was as good as asking for a part of Provence. For Henry VIII. he claimed a portion of the ancient English possessions. This altogether was tantamount to the dismemberment of France in the south, on the eastern frontier, and on the coast. Moreover he insisted that in future homage should not be rendered for Flanders or for Artois: the renunciation on the part of France to any claim on Italy had been already obtained.

A fresh war indeed, and any further success of the armies of Charles V. and of Henry VIII, might have rendered necessary this partition of a considerable portion of French territory among the Empire, England, and the Duke of Bourbon; but Francis I. although a prisoner, humbled, and disarmed, could not consent to such terms. These demands originating in the exaggerated pride of Charles V, and this intemperate display of ambition which was rare in his life, caused Henry VIII. to make some cool reflections on the enormous additional power which the Emperor would acquire if he seconded his views. It roused too in Italy a feeling of independence, which the advisers of the King of France and his mother the Regent were not slow to turn to their own advantage, and to use as a means of detaching Henry VIII. from the alliance with the Emperor; whilst, on the other hand, it aided the imperial counsellors in their endeavours to bring their master to wiser ideas and less preposterous pretensions.

The sentiments of Charles V, shown in this case by acts full of passion, but expressed as at other times in temperate language, may, in these grave circumstances, be open to some doubt. It is probable that, after the first explosion of ambition and of passion, he conceived the more wicked but surer project of prolonging indefinitely the French monarch's captivity, with the hope thus to bring him in the end, by weariness of mind and of heart, to consent

to hard terms. What is known of the character of Charles V. does not exclude this supposition. It was not his custom to form great resolutions in a hurry; and this one may be called passive in its character. Francis I. was already in prison; to keep him there was to do nothing. There was, however, against this plan the chance of the King's death, and of thus opening the question of the French succession. The anxiety of Charles was considerable when his royal prisoner fell seriously ill. The Emperor then paid him a visit, and by giving him fresh courage restored him to health.

The Treaty of Madrid, which set aside the rights of France to any territory in Italy, and which took away Burgundy from her, was not signed till after Charles V, Henry VIII, Francis I, Cardinal Wolsey, the Pope, the Regent Louisa of Savoy, Duprat the Emperor's Chancellor, and Gattinara his Minister, had considered the matter very seriously. The exaggerated pretensions of Charles V. lessened Henry's liking for the Emperor, and made him jealous of his power. Louisa of Savoy, devoted to Francis I, prudent and ambitious, seized, and took full advantage of, the opportunity to force upon Henry VIII. her money and her friendship, and to break the alliance between England and the Empire. Charles V. was content to conclude a treaty with France, which was indeed advantageous, but less exorbitant in its terms than the one he attempted at first to obtain from Francis I. in his state of discourage-

ment. The French and Spanish advisers, the Archbishop of Embrun, Duprat, Gattinara, even Pescara and Lannoy, expressed themselves in favour of peace, every one of them according to circumstances and to their views urging some conditions more favourable in some points, or combating others which were utterly unreasonable.[1] Thus all these persons, modifying their wishes in divers ways, and looking more coolly at the opposing interests which they had to support, concurred in bringing about a treaty of peace. The King himself, during the period of his captivity, was acted upon by various influences. He first counted upon the generosity of his rival, then on his vanity, and he addressed various supplications to him. Then the King's courage failed him; he lost patience, and became really ill; until the imperturbable coldness with which the Emperor treated him at length caused him to reason as follows: he thought the partition of France would entail eternal dishonour on the country and on the sovereign; that his death in prison would be of no sort of advantage to France; France could be saved only by continuing the war, and further, that the war could not be carried on without him. It was therefore necessary above all things to sign a treaty of peace, even if it were an unfavourable one; he would promise at the same

[1] Gattinara to the last remained faithful to the opinion that the cession of Burgundy was an indispensable condition of the treaty. (Gachard, *Captivité*, &c.)

time to the French about his person not to execute the treaty; thus he should become free. This project, favoured and supported as it was by the discontent of the people, by the jealousy inspired by Charles V, and by the necessity of obtaining the consent of the Estates to the cession of a French province, was conceived, prepared, and carried into effect with all the care, the silence, and the calmness which despair could suggest to a soldier, who had no other alternative before him, except the darkness of a prison, a long agony, an obscure death, and the misery of his country. The hardness of Charles V, and his persistent insensibility, removed all scruples of conscience on the part of Francis I. He lied indeed; but he had resolved to lie, and to say that he had lied without flinching. He forgave himself his perjury beforehand, by giving a sort of solemnity to his determination to break his promise, and to annul his bond, and by drawing up before such of his advisers as were present in Madrid a protest to that effect. This authentic document has come down to us.

III.

Such was Francis I. at a most important crisis of his life. We take an interest in his captivity, and, after considering all the circumstances of the moment, we are almost tempted to excuse the false

oath which gave him his liberty. What he did at Madrid, and after he left Madrid, is not inconsistent with the rest of his conduct. He was guilty only this once in his life of a deliberate political lie ; perhaps he might have acted thus again, had the same necessity arisen ; it is not that he was deficient in frankness, in good faith, or in grandeur of character, but he was, above all things, frivolous, carried away by his passions, heedless, and forgetful, sometimes of his promises, but never of his pleasures. At Madrid, at the age of thirty-two, he was no longer what he had been at Marignan, and in subsequent years. Misfortune, anxiety, and the rapid deterioration of a naturally excellent constitution, had already told on him. He then had the same weaknesses which clung to him all through life : imprudence, thoughtlessness, and want of consequence in his ideas, were as visible in his affections as they were in his projects. He was as changeable about men as he was about public affairs ; he placed his confidence successively, with more or less reason, in Duprat, Lautrec, Bonnivet, and Montmorency. He had all the defects of character which we have named, and he retained them throughout his life. The brilliant qualities of his youth had already lost much of their gloss. Under all circumstances he invariably displayed undaunted courage, and he risked on every occasion with gaiety a life which at one time was so happy. Leaving to others, frequently to unwise counsellors, the

burden of military operations and all their details, he loved battle for its own sake, as a purely physical and personal enjoyment; but he took no interest or pleasure in the combinations to be made beforehand, or the fruits of the victory to be gathered afterwards. Ardent, carried away and intoxicated with the glory to be obtained by courage in the *mêlée*, which was almost selfish in its recklessness, he may be said to have been rather adventurous than chivalrous; there was nothing lasting in his friendships, as there was nothing disinterested in his ideas; his conduct was totally devoid of devotion or love of sacrifice. The election to the Empire and the Treaty of Madrid show to what a point he would go in his imprudent ardour to attain his ends, and his readiness in getting over any scruples as to means that might stand in his way. These two events give the measure of the man and paint his character. To brave all obstacles, to neglect precautions, and to feel by fits and starts all the best and some of the worst sentiments—to despise logic—to defend, and then abandon, the Italians—first to protect, and then to burn, the protestants—to compromise the noblest position and to ruin the finest constitution—these were the contradictions which make up the character of Francis I. as handed down to us in the memoirs of the time. To view this brilliant apparition in its fullest light, we must not look at him in his premature old age, when he was morose, capricious,

and ill; we must see him when he was young, tall, robust, joyous, supple, and active, with a face, a smile, and a wit which were charming,—a true child of France, and one of whom France was proud,—speaking the beautiful language of his country with a vivacity and a gaiety remarkable for its Gallic spirit and its pointed sarcasm. Excitable and imaginative, he promoted the ideas of the Renaissance; fond of the arts, he believed honestly that protection was as beneficial to them as independence, and, in his fervent admiration for genius, he supported Leonardo da Vinci's dying head on his breast. As brave and as well-bred, but less politic and less prudent, he was handsomer than Henry IV.; he was as gallant, but more warlike and more frank than Louis XIV. Francis I. exhibits to us the attractive but opposite characteristics of a soldier, of a passionate lover of the chase, of a man of pleasure, of an Epicurean who is fond of study, of an assiduous scholar who dreams of being celebrated in verse by Ariosto, who reads Thucydides, and offers hospitality to Erasmus.

It was evident that the Treaty of Madrid had no element of stability. On one side it had been signed by Francis I. with a fixed determination to break it; on the other hand, it increased the disquiet of Europe by confirming Charles V. in the possession of a dominion which was exorbitant. There was therefore among the other European sovereigns, besides the King of France, an almost

immediate desire to break the treaty. Had Francis I. been more able and more prudent, he would have turned this disposition of the European sovereigns towards the Emperor to his own profit—he would have induced the other princes, who were alarmed and jealous of the preponderance of Charles, to contract solemn engagements with himself. The public feeling in France, coinciding with that of Europe, was moreover favourable to such a scheme. The King found himself once more in one of those positions where public opinion and general interests seconded his efforts, and suggested his course—when fortune, hitherto so favourable to Spain, might perhaps have turned towards France, had Francis I. possessed the same amount of prudence, of tenacity of purpose, and of patience as he had of courage. Henry VIII. felt as much alarmed for the independence of Europe as for the safety of central Italy.

This situation of affairs was seen for a moment, but it was not appreciated or quietly turned to his own profit by Francis I. To do so indeed required an immense and continued effort, with a strict and decided agreement between those who were principally interested,—between France, England, and the Pope. Moreover, it was essential that the war should be conducted with an energy and ability sufficient to cope with the victorious troops of the Empire. It was important that Francis I. and his allies (who formed what was called the "Holy League," because the Pope was at its head) should

gain a great victory over the Imperialists. France did not gain this victory; Rome was taken and sacked by the troops of the Emperor, who found he had made a prisoner of the Sovereign Pontiff as he had found himself on a former occasion the gaoler of the King of France.

From that moment Charles V. again wished to make peace. It could not suit his purpose, by keeping the Pope prisoner, to favour any movement in Italy, nor to encourage, by a struggle between the Empire and the Holy See, the progress of the Reformation in Germany. Moreover, the Emperor's finances were at a low ebb, and the Low Countries bore with an ill grace the burdens of the war.

Francis I. also was anxious for peace, because it was imperatively required by the material exhaustion of his kingdom, because his mother, who then had great influence in the government of the country, counselled it, and because he wished to see his children, who were still hostages in the hands of Charles V.

The Peace of Cambrai, called the "Paix des Dames" (Ladies' Peace), was signed by Louisa of Savoy and Margaret of Austria: its distinctive trait was that Charles V. renounced the claim on Burgundy, which the Treaty of Madrid had given him. In a certain sense he went out of his way to make this sacrifice, since he knew he could not deprive France of so important a province, unless he began

by invading the French territory. His aunt, Margaret of Austria, was his political guide in this matter. "Your finances," she said, "are too much disordered for you to continue the war. If the King of France signs the treaty, you will see that he will sacrifice all his allies." The treaty did in fact exact from Francis I. the abandonment of all his political associates.

The Peace of Cambrai, concluded three years after the Treaty of Madrid (1526-1529), confirmed the principles of the latter; it marks a second unlucky stage in the career of Francis I, less unlucky than the first only because, after fresh disasters to the allies of France, the French monarch by this treaty lost no province. It was however a further advantage gained by the Emperor over the King; it again indicated the superiority of the forces of which he disposed, and perhaps still more his own personal ascendency. This treaty, which isolated France from the rest of Europe, was negotiated in the name of the Emperor with great skill. It left in his hands the Milanese, which he had obtained by the victory of Pavia; and it confirmed him anew in the possession of Milan itself, an important and definitive result in the history of this reign.

The Treaty of Barcelona, made with the Pope, is dated about the same time as the Treaty of Cambrai. It re-established the power of the Medicis at Florence, spite of Michel Angelo. It was then

that Clement VII. placed the crown of the Empire and the iron crown of Lombardy on the head of Charles V.

About thirty-six years had now elapsed since Charles VIII. of France had undertaken his expedition against Naples. Three Kings of France in an indirect line had succeeded each other: but the last of the three had been much more glorious in his outset, and much more illustrious by his qualities than the other two: they all three had waged war in Italy, first against the Spanish forces, then against armies composed of Spaniards, Germans, and Italians. They had gained victories, they had held Milan and Naples, had given assistance to the republics, and had encouraged the Italians in their last struggles for independence. But their success had not made up for their reverses. For the most part these wars had been conducted by the Kings of France with negligence and want of order: the troops had been ill supplied, and more than once the command of them had been bestowed on the principle of favour rather than of merit. In the end, France was driven out of Italy. The country from the foot of the Alps to its very extremity had been subjugated. It appeared a settled thing that Spain was to be the mistress of the Mediterranean and of Italy, especially now that the sceptre of the Empire and of Spain were united in one and the same hand.

IV.

When the Treaty of Cambrai was signed, Charles had reigned for thirteen years as King, and ten as Emperor. He was twenty-nine years of age; fortune had been propitious to him in his election and in two wars; the first had been marked by the victory of Pavia and the captivity of Francis I, and the second by the happy conduct of the war against France, the sack of Rome, and the captivity of the Pope. The Emperor had not yet reached the middle of his reign, the whole of which was destined to be as full of incidents as the first half had been. He already had full occupation in dealing with France, with the north, with Italy, and with those countries where the Ottoman armies had made their appearance; but his policy was destined to be further complicated by military and religious affairs in Germany. It is true that these matters only reached their crisis towards the latter part of his reign, but the difficulties were already evident enough and were increasing. We must touch slightly on this point.

The war between Charles V. and the protestant princes of Germany forms one of the important episodes in the latter part of his reign which we have not yet nearly reached. But at different times during his earlier years, even before the promulgation

of the Confession of Augsburg, the existence of the Reformation was one of the objects which occupied his thoughts and was a cause of embarrassment. It interfered with other events which were equally grave and complicated, and added much to the general confusion. The war in which the protestants took part in the reign of Charles V. belongs to the history of that long struggle which began with the first preachings of Luther, and was only definitively closed by the Peace of Ryswick, when, after the second English revolution, Louis XIV. recognised the throne of William III. During this long period the war was carried on between the power of the monarch in defence of its principle and its authority on the one side, and on the other, those who maintained the right of free inquiry, almost indefinite in its character and unlimited in its action; these last were assisted by such elements of the old feudal state of society, and of that which succeeded it, as yet remained alive or could be resuscitated. If we observe this struggle, at the time of the League of Smalcalde, during the wars of religion in France, during the Thirty Years' War, and at the beginning of the wars of the Fronde, we shall see in the main the selfsame principles reproduced. The reformers, like the feudal chiefs, put forward claims to control and modify—the one the religion, the other the politics of their time.

In the reign of Charles V. the reformers ranged

themselves under the name of Luther, and the party of the princes or other leaders under that of the Elector of Saxony, of the Landgrave of Hesse, or of other German princes who were less conspicuous. The princes knew perfectly well what they were about, and why they were the adversaries of the Empire; but the reformers of that day were less sure of what they thought and believed, or what it was they wanted. The Reformation was at its first stage, its ideas were not fixed, and its next step undecided. It could not be otherwise. It has effected a great revolution in men's minds and in the states of Europe: but those who first promulgated and supported its doctrines only advanced its progress by one step. If we observe its career from the first appearance of Luther only down to the latter years of Calvin, we see at once that it carried one point after another in its attack on the old dogmas. If we were to attempt to express by a succession of proper names the steps in the progress thus made, we should cite, as answering to the successive shades of the Reformation, the names of Erasmus, Melancthon, Luther, Zuingli, and Calvin. Erasmus specified and attacked the abuses of the Church, but he did not leave its pale. Melancthon, who was the head of the Reformation next to Luther, was distracted by doubts and regrets during the greater part of his life: in his hostility to the Church he showed the natural indecision of his character and of his

temperament. Luther, as the base of his doctrine, maintained justification by faith without works; that is to say, the necessity of the direct correspondence of man with the Deity without the intervention of the Church. He maintained its tenets in certain points, and altered them in others; but he personally respected the dogma of the real presence in the sacred elements. Zuingli denounced that dogma, and this is what marks the difference between the Swiss and the Saxon reformer. If we are to express concisely the true position of Calvin, he was in fact the organizer of the reformed Church. These are distinctions which we perceive at the present time, but which were far from clearly seen by the people of that day. Those who like Charles V. had to deal with the reformers as with adversaries whom it was necessary to fight, or to bring to some compromise, —those who were witnesses to its first development,—saw clearly enough that Calvin was a much more determined and intractable spirit than Melancthon to deal with, but they did not appreciate the full importance of the questions which separated the two men. In 1521, the Diet of Worms had adopted the first repressive measures against the Reformation. From this time until the day when he went to war with the protestants, after having given up all idea of dealing gently with them—that is to say, for a period of about twenty-five years—Charles V. hesitated, with regard

to the reformers, between peace and war, between concession and resistance, between toleration and repression. His constant tendency was to give up points of secondary importance, and to maintain those which he held to be fundamental. But the question as to what points were merely accessory, and what were essential, was never cleared up or decided for him. There never could be any doubt as to the real presence; Luther did not attack it; but the communion by the laity in both kinds, the celibacy of the clergy, and, above all, the toleration of priests already married under the influence of the new ideas, a modification of the rules for fasting, and the regulation of festivals and holidays—was it possible for all these things to be admitted without injuring and shaking to its very foundation the unity of the Church? Charles V. asked himself this question long and frequently. His mind was long occupied with some scheme, the object of which,—not very well defined,—was to stave off the Reformation by certain measures of toleration. The exact point where such toleration was to cease was never fixed in his mind. He searched for it assiduously, and, by making war against the reformers as against rebels, during the latter part of his reign, he gave the world to understand that he had not succeeded in finding it. The danger which menaced Catholicism struck him less forcibly than the danger likely to arise from the abolition of all restraint on men's minds, and from a right of

free inquiry applicable to all subjects; the course of which was as difficult to foresee as it was for Charles himself to say at what point he should begin his resistance.

When he met the protestants in arms, he showed himself a devoted son of the Church. He had been such at the beginning of his life, when the Reformation gave him no embarrassment; and he was such also at the end of his career, when he had determined to wage war with the reformers as with a hostile power. But in the interval, while the religious dispute lasted, his conscience allowed him a certain latitude. He felt that he could exercise a sort of gentle pressure upon the papacy, so as to bring it to make concessions which he thought desirable. His constant wish was to get the whole question discussed at a General Council, in which the new doctrines of the Reformation would have been duly represented, and allowed free liberty of speech.

Such is, according to our view, the position of Charles V. at that period of his life, with reference to the Reformation. At epochs which approach nearer to our own times, the Reformation has sometimes been viewed in a somewhat similar manner. It has been said the Reformation did not spring from the sale of indulgences, nor from the personal resistance of Melancthon or of Luther, nor was it caused by the riotous living of Alexander VI.; it had its origin in causes of a very general

character, such as the old antagonism between the Holy See and the Empire, the conquering and crafty conduct of the Popes of the sixteenth century, the position of certain of the German princes in regard to the Empire, the flagrant and yet remediable abuses of the Church, the exaggeration of the intellectual movement of the Renaissance, —that is to say, it was traceable to causes which are historical, transitory, and changeable, and not to any distinct state of men's minds, which rendered some new dogma necessary. If this was the case, it may be asked whether so absolute a separation between the Church and the Reformation was inevitable. Was not a compromise possible, when men had had to deal,—not with Popes so absorbed in their temporal power and their existence as sovereigns, as were Alexander VI, Julius II, Leo X, and Clement VII,—but with Popes as religious, as austere, and as politically disinterested as Adrian VI.? Would not the progress of Lutheranism in such a case have come to an end? Did not the unflinching resistance it encountered aggravate and strengthen the movement? Ideas such as these, discussed by the bolder Roman Catholic historians in perfect liberty and without alarming their consciences, germinated, as they well might, in the active but irresolute brain of Charles V. He asked himself vaguely, but patiently, whether it were not possible for a mediator, powerful as himself, to bring about a solution of this dangerous

problem, and whether some reconciliation were not possible in terms which should embrace both the generous and pious toleration of Adrian and the ideas of Erasmus—ideas, however, which only pointed out the abuses without specifying the remedies; and which claimed the exercise of the right of private judgment in theory, while in practice the boldness of the philosopher was to be compatible with the submission of the orthodox Christian?

But we must not dwell too long on considerations which at no epoch had much effect on the events of religious history, and which would be out of place here, were it not that they serve to define, in a tolerably exact manner, the undecided condition of Charles's mind with reference to the new religion.

The conduct of the Imperial Diets with regard to the Reformation was not more consistent than that of the Emperor. The decisions given at the Diet at Worms in 1521, at Spire in 1526 and in 1529, and at Augsburg in 1530, were at variance one with the other. The Diet of Worms was severe, the first Diet at Spire was more tolerant, the second again was more severe; and at the Diet of Augsburg, where the Confession of Melancthon was promulgated, a profound separation, if not the positive rupture, between the Emperor and the princes favourable to the Reformation was strongly marked. The Confession of Augsburg was meant

by Melancthon to be a conciliatory exposition of the objects of the reformers; but he never indulged in the hope of its being accepted as a compromise. The Emperor, at the Diet of Augsburg, endeavoured without success, as at former Diets, to find some common ground for such a compromise. The Confession of Augsburg comprehends the following principal articles: Justification by faith without works; communion in both kinds; and the marriage of the priests. It modifies in other paragraphs the worship of saints, the rules of fasting and of festivals, and monastic vows. It indicates, in an evident manner, the impossibility of any reconciliation between the State and the reformed Church, which had been the object of the Emperor's vain desire. We may probably date from this time the change which Charles V.'s ideas underwent in regard to the Reformation; henceforth the hope of living at peace with the reformers vanished from his mind. He saw three dangers which threatened his throne: the political union of the Protestants with the King of France, a violent explosion against the Empire, and a great encouragement to the projects of the Sultan.

After he had ended two wars and signed two treaties of peace with France, an epoch occurs in the life of Charles V. which is in some degree one of transition. The causes of the antagonism with France were not exhausted, but the Emperor was already thinking that, in order to complete the

whole of his undertakings, and to fulfil all his duties, he must of necessity take up arms at some time against the protestant princes of Germany. He did not yet see the end of his struggle with France, but he clearly foresaw the struggle in Germany. Although still young in years, illness had already weakened him. He occupied a great and strong position: he had everywhere maintained his power; his armies were victorious, and his territory intact; Italy had several times repelled the attacks of Francis I. But the triumphs of Charles V. had left him in an uneasy condition: he was not in peaceful possession of his conquests; the war had again broken out on the confines of the Alps, and in Picardy. It appeared as though Francis I. could not brook seeing the Emperor the master in the south and in the north of Italy. Both belligerents were oppressed by a feeling of lassitude, and by financial difficulties; both had political reasons for continuing the war, and strong material reasons for putting an end to it.

The power of Charles V. was great enough, and his superiority quite sufficiently real, for him to be the mainspring of European affairs; the condition of things ought to be his work, and their character and their incidents certainly ought to bear the impress of his thoughts and of his will. His ambition no longer was to conquer France; she was conquered: but his ambition would shortly be to make himself the master of Germany. Anyhow it was

necessary to end the French war, without compromising or losing anything, and an operation which had already absorbed so many years, which had had its difficulties and its perils, might take a long time to bring to a conclusion, especially when he who regulates its progress was by nature slow to move and to act. This phase in the career of Charles V, which we have thus endeavoured to illustrate, was not one of short duration. He felt a longing ambition to transport his armies into Germany; but he was determined from the very first, when the idea entered his head, not to burden himself with the weight of two wars at once.

It was at this epoch that Charles V. himself made his glorious campaign against Barbarossa in Tunis, and returned to Europe with a reputation for personal prowess which his previous triumphs, due to the merit of his lieutenants, had not yet obtained for him. On the other hand, a thought seems now to have struck him for the first time: it was that his power was too vast to be solid and lasting; too vast for it to be possible for him to transmit it without danger, or for it to last after him. This thought was destined to arise again in his mind; it was to be the cause of profound meditation on his part, and the origin of projects which afterwards took a consistent form, but of which a part only was realized at the time of his abdication. When he was occupied with preparations for making peace with France, and, further still, with the war against

the protestant princes of Germany, he also considered whether, in order to consolidate and concentrate his forces, it would not be prudent to detach from the mass of his possessions one or other territory, to which a special destination should be given, of such a nature as to tranquillize Europe.

Although we now possess a voluminous mass of the private correspondence of Charles V, collected from the different archives of Europe, we have not yet found the key to all his secrets: we are forced to guess at their solution. His character was so essentially reserved, that he did not open his heart to his brother, nor even to Margaret of Austria, who was often his guide; nor yet to his advisers, Gattinara, or Granvelle,—in fact, to no one in Spain, Germany, or in the Low Countries.

The correspondence with Margaret of Austria proves that at this period his embarrassments were on the increase in Flanders; the people were becoming more embittered, as the calls were more frequent for contributions from means which were smaller. The financial resources of Charles V. were never equal to his wants. His territorial power was always out of all proportion to his means, and even beyond the force which he possessed for organizing his armies. The Low Countries, the richest of his dominions, furnished subsidies for his wars, with considerable repugnance for some time, and offered a vigorous resistance to the demands of Margaret of Austria when their means were ex-

hausted, or were on the point of being so. The letters of Margaret of Austria are full of anxiety when she narrates the discussions of the Estates, their discontent and their menacing language: she presses on them with patient energy; but she finds herself driven to various expedients, such as mortgaging the future taxes in order to raise money for present use; and she foresees domestic misery and danger in case the war were prolonged.[1]

It was under the influence of these remote projects on Germany, and of his ideas on the necessity of preparing for war with the reformers, that Charles V. was induced to conclude with Francis I. a truce for ten years, called the "Truce of Nice." In the midst of his various difficulties and embarrassments, this was in fact the principal motive for his wish to interrupt, if not to put an end to, the French war. This arrangement seems to have been intended to give time to the two contracting powers to reflect before entering upon more definite treaties.

The signing of this document implies no change in the feelings of Charles V. towards Francis I. It was but a short time before that, on his return from Africa, in his passage through Italy, Charles had made a violent speech at Rome against the King of France, in the presence of the Pope and of

[1] These facts are narrated in detail and with great exactness in the learned work of M. Alexandre Henne, *Histoire du Règne de Charles V. en Belgique.* 10 vols. 8vo.

a large assembly of prelates. This expression of his true feelings escaped him during a violent fit of passion, but he took measures the next day to soften down what he had said.

Francis I, who was prevented by the exhausted state of his finances from prolonging the war, signed the truce, which, in its provisional form, still left open to him the hope of some day recovering the duchy of Milan.

The two sovereigns did not meet at Nice; but at Aigues-Mortes they had an interview, which the Pope, to the great annoyance of the King of England, facilitated and encouraged.

V.

THUS the two rivals were again reconciled for a time, but the reconciliation was not to last long. This pacific arrangement which they had just signed was the fourth: for they had treated one with the other at Noyon, at Madrid, at Cambrai, and at Nice. The first time they had not yet had recourse to arms; on the other occasions it was after a contest in which Charles V. had been victorious. The most important result of these wars was, that Charles acquired the Milanese territory in the first war, and that he held possession of it during the rest of the time. He kept his preponderance in Italy, and

maintained his influence in the centre of the peninsula, by his hold on its two extremities.

The Emperor and the King had not yet given up the idea of fighting. Nevertheless, they were both of them older than their years warranted; for Charles V. approached his fortieth year before the termination of the truce, and Francis I. was forty-five. Both of them had been very ill, and their constitutions were seriously impaired; that of the King of France by his excesses, that of the Emperor by violent and frequent attacks of gout. From the year 1535, at the age of thirty-five, the Emperor had already thought of abdicating, and of retiring from the world The temper of the two monarchs, their ardour, their activity of mind, had felt the effect of these maladies and these sufferings. For them old age had commenced, with its moroseness, its feeling of hopelessness, its sorrows, and its peculiar manner of looking at the things of this life and what remains of it.

Charles V. had returned to Spain after the truce. In a short time he had to occupy himself with an important event, and to put himself out of his way to meet it. This event was the outbreak of an insurrection in Ghent.

The Municipality of Ghent, as the fourth member of Flanders,[1] had to pay its share of an aid to which the Estates of the province had given their assent; but, their money and their patience being exhausted,

[1] With Bruges, Yprès, and "The Franchise."

the people of Ghent refused to pay, and took up arms. Under the circumstances in which Europe was then placed, it was a question whether this movement was made at the instigation of France, or whether there was any intelligence and sympathy on the part of Ghent with the Reformation in Germany. The documents which M. Gachard has collected on this subject have completely proved that the insurrection of Ghent is to be attributed to a revival of the old municipal spirit, combined with great financial distress and discontent.[1] The Reformation had very little to do with it, and France absolutely nothing. The insurrection was very violent in character. Since the time when Philip the Good, by the Treaty of Gavre, in 1453, had reduced and almost annihilated the ancient privileges of the municipality of Ghent, that city had received a new charter, in the year 1477, from the feeble government of Mary of Burgundy; and on this charter the Municipality rested its right to refuse the subsidy. Money was asked for: men were offered. Charles wanted artillery and cavalry, while Ghent proposed to send foot soldiers. Some incidents occurred worth noting. The ancient privileges of the Commune, granted by the old Counts of Flanders, were preserved in an iron chest with three keys; this chest could only be got at through a moveable trap-door in a ceiling.[2] The chest had

[1] *Relation des Troubles de Gand en* 1539. 1 vol. 4to.

[2] *Mémoires de M. Ch. Steur sur les Troubles de Gand*, in the collection of the *Mémoires couronnés de l'Académie royale de Belgique.*

three padlocks, the keys of which were entrusted to the keeping of the three deans of the Guilds. In 1536, the dean of the Weavers had mislaid his key. The town locksmith, ordered to make another key, had broken one of the padlocks; and suspicion of treachery was raised against one of the other deans who had lent his key for the operation. It was alleged that the chest had been forced, and the charters removed or changed. These circumstances, to which people added details which were exaggerated, imaginary, and superstitious, recurred to men's minds when the insurrection broke out. The dean on whom suspicion rested was brought to trial, condemned, and executed. The popular movement went through all the regular phases of a revolution: it began with the middle classes, and was soon taken out of their hands by the democracy. The Governess of the Low Countries sent some one authorized to negotiate, or deal with them with vigour, as might be necessary. The middle class then again got the upper hand for a time. Margaret of Austria, who had died some years before, had been succeeded as Governess of the Low Countries by Mary, the widow of Louis II. King of Hungary, and sister of Charles V. Mary of Hungary, with a totally different character, likewise brought to this task extreme good sense and great courage.

The Emperor, who was at Madrid when the news of what was occurring in the Low Countries was brought to him, attached great importance to these

events. After careful consideration he resolved to go in person to the revolted city, and to finish the matter himself. This resolution, taken dispassionately and coolly, was executed with remarkable firmness and deliberation.

Charles V. and Francis I. were at that time on friendly terms. Francis I, urged by Montmorency, offered to shorten the Emperor's journey by allowing him a passage across France, and he promised him not only a respectful but a cordial reception. Charles V. accepted the invitation, and made the journey without the slightest precipitation, prolonging his stay in the large towns, accepting the *fêtes* given to him, and travelling as if in triumph rather than as a sovereign on his way to put down an insurrection. It was quite sufficient that in Flanders they should know he was coming. He made it a point of honour to show that he was in no hurry; and he thus gave to all he did in the matter a character of force, of calmness, and of grandeur. He arrived at Ghent, not with a force sufficient to put down an insurrection, but at the head of a formidable army, consisting of four or five thousand horse drawn from Germany, and of other troops whom the people of Ghent had to receive at free quarters, as a first instalment of the punishment in store for them.

The entry of Charles V. into Ghent was that of a conqueror; and his power of repression was such that the revolt never again lifted up its head. The

punishment itself was as slow and as cold as the preparations of the expedition had been. Justice was exact and inflexible: but it had not the character of vengeance, because there was not a particle of passion in its application. Charles V. conducted the proceedings against the people of Ghent with as much coolness as any one would make up an account. He did not shed blood for blood; he tracked the guilty, one by one, without passion, but without mercy; he did what he thought was necessary, not so much to punish the rebellion as to make its renewal impossible. After having done with the insurgents, he looked to the institutions; he abolished the communal privileges of which the people of Ghent had made such dangerous use, and he replaced them by a celebrated enactment, the object of which was to provide for the future as well as for the present, and to subject once for all to a monarchical *régime* a town which had thought itself in the full enjoyment of a republican form of government. The chief feature in the change was, that the magistrates, who had hitherto been chosen by the people, by virtue of the new ordinance became imperial officers. When this operation was completed, Charles V. quitted Flanders without betraying any feeling, save the proud satisfaction of having discharged his duty as a monarch with calm determination.[1]

[1] See an excellent address made by Professor Borgnet, at the opening of the Academic Session of Liège of 1852-53; *Relation anonyme des*

At other critical times of his life Charles V. did not always act as we have seen him act at Ghent in the presence of the insurrection of a city. In this case there was no complication to guard against, and no choice to make between two courses. In his eyes the revolt of Ghent had nothing to do with affairs in France, nor with those of Germany. The continuation of the troubles however would doubtless increase the difficulty of raising money in Flanders, and might thus compromise the prestige of the imperial power. He could not therefore hesitate. The path was clearly marked, and he followed it with the most even and firm step.

The insurrection at Ghent is but an isolated episode in the life of Charles V, and by no means one of the most important pages of his reign. If in it he showed, as far as regarded the insurgents, a firmness of execution and an energy of decision—which were not always seen in him—it was, doubtless, because the insurrection was not mixed up with other matters, and because it did not lead him to fear any general consequences. In his political schemes the Low Countries, where he was born, by no means occupied the first rank; but they were a great resource

Troubles de Gand; Histoire du Règne de Charles V. by M. Alexander Henne, vol. v. and vi.; *Mémoire de M. Steur.* The sentence is to be found in the Appendix to the Narrative of the Troubles of Ghent, p. 134–153. The magistrates are named directly by the Emperor (Art. 2); the guilds were reduced from fifty-three to twenty-one (Art. 69); the *Collace*, a representative meeting of the three members of the city, was replaced by a meeting of the magistrates of the current year, and of the two preceding years (Art. 67).

to him in his financial difficulties. They were much more seriously menaced during all this epoch by the northern allies of France, by the League of the north, by Guelderland and her allies, than by France herself. The contest indeed took place more than once on the southern frontiers of the Low Countries, in Picardy, and on the banks of the Somme. It was especially so at the time when Henry VIII. took the side of the Emperor. But the Low Countries themselves never formed one of the principal objects of the war, nor did they ever on their own account become a cause of pressing danger or of grave embarrassment. With the exception of the insurrection at Ghent, Charles V. for the most part left the entire management of affairs in the Low Countries to Margaret of Austria, his aunt, and to Mary of Hungary, his sister. He placed the most absolute confidence in both of them and in some of those who were about them, or who were in command of the troops. They both served Charles V. with unbounded zeal and devotion; and, as we have already remarked, they occasionally went beyond the limits of their government, and interfered, either by word of mouth or actively, in the general policy of Europe.

Charles V. had just crossed France without fear: so far as appearances went his reception had been friendly. He was at peace with Francis I; and he travelled through his country like an honoured guest. Thus the French king, who had refused all

the advances and the proposals for an alliance, on the part of the people of Ghent, appeared to give to Charles V. every facility for suppressing the revolt. Nevertheless, the questions at issue between France and the Empire had not been by any means arranged. Burgundy, as well as a part of Piedmont, still remained in the hands of the French monarch; and the Milanese territory was still retained by Charles. Meanwhile the Protestants were increasing in numbers, and had levied a regular army; the Sultan had not ceased to menace the Austrian dominions, and the Barbary pirates still infested the shores of the Mediterranean.

Had the recently published correspondence of Charles V. been as ample on the subject of the events of this epoch as they are on those of subsequent years, we should probably know the exact truth concerning these important circumstances.

This much, however, is quite certain, that the invitation given to Charles V. to travel through France was much more than a mere act of civility; and his acceptance indicated something very different from the wish to take the shortest possible route to Ghent.

When this journey took place, the idea of an understanding between the Empire and France,—the germ of which existed between the two monarchs when the Treaty of Nice was signed,—had developed itself and had taken decided hold on the mind of Charles V. On the side of France, this

idea had made some progress, not so much with the King as among those immediately about him who directed public affairs. The Emperor wanted peace with France: the Constable de Montmorency, and all those who were of his party, especially the Dauphin and his mistress, were of the same mind. It is a question whether any conferences were held during the journey through France between Charles and Francis, or between Charles and Montmorency; and whether the conditions of a peace were proposed. It is a question whether the party of the Constable, which was anxious for peace, made any overtures, or received any advances, on this point, without the knowledge or the consent of the French monarch. On all these points there are great doubts.

What we can affirm is, that Charles V. was quite prepared to make sacrifices in order to obtain peace; and that Francis I. was persuaded that the hospitality offered to the Emperor deserved, and would obtain, some considerable territorial recompense—that is to say, the Milanese territory.

This was a pure illusion, which had its origin in the imagination of Francis I,—an illusion which Montmorency, unwise as he frequently showed himself, never shared. Moreover, Charles V. cannot be accused of having encouraged such an idea, although during the journey, by the use of kindly and adroit language, he flattered the French with the prospect of better times for the future.

On the part of the Emperor, however, and of

Montmorency, this journey is remarkable in connexion with an important scheme, deeply pondered by the Emperor, and taken up lightly and blindly by the Constable. These two men had some principles in common. Montmorency, mistaking the tendencies and the true interest of the policy of France, was willing to abet the Emperor in his schemes, which were to put down the religious movement in Germany, and to resist the Turks. Moreover, he was in favour of opposing the republican principle wheresoever it yet existed in Italy, and all political or religious liberty in Germany; he therefore was eager to give every facility to the Emperor to put down the insurrection of the Communes in Ghent. At one time he even dreamt of the partition of England between Spain, France, and Scotland, as the result of an alliance between France and the Emperor. Such was the licence which the Constable allowed to his imagination. For some years Charles V. had cherished, and had ended by almost adopting, an idea which we may term vast, even if we deny it to be just. He wished to bring the French war to an end, to devote all his energies to the suppression of the German League, and to stop the advance of the Turks: he was prepared to make some territorial sacrifice, with the double view of tranquillising France and Europe, while he buoght up their interest, and at the same time he made his own power more compact. He therefore proposed, not

indeed during his sojourn in France, but shortly afterwards, to bring about a marriage between the Duke of Orleans, and either his own daughter, or his niece—his brother's daughter,—to give to the bride, as a marriage portion, the Milanese territory —on condition it should revert to him on failure of children of the marriage; or else he offered to bestow on them a state formed out of the Low Countries and of Franche-Comté, with certain dependencies: which thus would have formed a kingdom of Belgian Gaul, or have re-created a duchy of Burgundy.

This scheme, so worthy of attention, and so long meditated, is one of a generous, prudent, and original character. It is the scheme of one who thinks his power too vast and too much separated; of one who already feels the approach of infirmities; of one who still thinks he has a great mission to perform, and reflects on his approaching end: it is the scheme of one who felt he should some day renounce the exercise of his enormous power, and retire to a monastery. There was sufficient in the scheme to captivate in France the party which wished to close the war, to stifle the Reformation, to combat the movement in favour of German independence, and to put down the last efforts of Italian liberty.

We can no longer say now-a-days, as was said in other times, that, in the course of his journey through France and afterwards, Charles, both in

his conversations and in his negotiations, gave proof only of a most manifest falseness. We may fairly admit that he was undecided between the creation on certain conditions of a kingdom of Burgundy or a kingdom of Milan. But it is difficult to deny that he came to France with the desire to make peace, so as to simplify his position and concentrate his powers of action; or that he was willing to obtain this result at the price of some sacrifice. The party in France in favour of peace and of the alliance of the Emperor and of the Pope against Germany and the Italian republics, was then represented by the Constable Montmorency and by the Dauphin. It did not obtain the support of the French monarch, nor, above all, of the Duchess of Etampes, whom Charles attempted to flatter by his attentions and to conciliate by a present. The influence of this lady after the death of Louisa of Savoy was long felt, and was triumphant on more than one occasion. Francis I. rejected the proposals that were made to him, because the appanage offered to his younger son was to revert to the Empire in case his future daughter-in-law should die without children, and also because he would not renounce his Piedmontese conquests, which peace would thus have taken away from him; and moreover because he still cherished the hope of recovering the Milanese, not for his son, but for himself, and by his own exertions. The negotiations were broken off, and this colossal plan

of pacification was abandoned. Montmorency felt that he was beaten and in disgrace, and retired from the court. Cardinal Tournon brought different ideas into the Government: for the Turkish alliance was renewed, and Francis I. levied an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men to begin the war afresh.

Such is the general notion which we may venture to form of the negotiations which took place, and of the views and schemes of Charles V. and Francis I. during and after the journey of the Emperor in France:—a notion no doubt somewhat founded on conjecture, and not established by documentary evidence.

The war which commenced after this journey of Charles V, and after the events in Ghent, and the pacific attempts of Montmorency, was a great war. It suited neither the political position of the King of France, nor the state of his health, nor that of his finances. He was isolated in Europe; he had lost the hope of an alliance with Henry VIII. or with the Republic of Venice, and he was reduced to an odious alliance with the Sultan; he could not look for the political support of the German protestants, because the rigorous measures exercised in France against the reformers by those who supported the imperial alliance had for the moment discouraged every attempt towards a union with the German princes. The position of the King of France in Europe was therefore, as indeed it

generally was, weaker than that of the Emperor. For reasons which we have already given, the Emperor had no wish to enter into this war, since it took his attention off from other projects far more important in his eyes: it was a useless and a defensive war, which could give him nothing that he coveted, and could not deprive him of anything he looked upon as essential. To him it was simply a loss of time and of money, and a useless expenditure of the small amount of active exertion which his ill health permitted him still to employ. During these years, too, a great disaster befell him on the coast of Africa, whither he in person had led a second expedition. In Europe, however, he had with Henry VIII. ties which Francis I. had vainly tried to form, and he had secured the most essential assistance of all; the German Diet had granted him considerable subsidies, in spite of the Protestant party, or rather in consequence of the divisions in that party; this aid he owed to the greater weight which he was able to give to the political interests of his friends in Germany as compared with the religious interests of his adversaries.

The war was carried on between the two sovereigns, both of them worn out, nearly ruined, and longing to bring it to an end for different reasons; the one because he had other interests to attend to, the other because his death was approaching. For one moment Paris was threatened with the

presence of an Anglo-Flemish army under its walls, and the flag of an enemy might possibly have again waved over that capital as it had done one hundred years before, if Henry VIII. had entered with more spirit into an alliance with the Emperor, and had he given him more vigorous support.

After several campaigns, in which Francis gained no great victory in a pitched battle, and did not recover the conquests he had lost twenty years before at the battle of Pavia, both parties began again to think and to talk about peace. But the rival influences which we have alluded to as prevailing in France at the time of the Truce of Nice and of the journey of Charles V. in France, had since then been much modified. Men's minds had undergone a complete revolution. Montmorency had not resumed his power in the state, nor reappeared at court. The King indeed had listened to his counsels to a certain extent, without abating one jot of his hatred against him; while the Dauphin and Diana of Poitiers, who before had been his friends and had supported him in his pacific policy, had now become hostile to a peace which was to endow the Duke of Orleans with a principality. The Duchess of Etampes had become such a partisan of peace that those anxious for war accused her of having betrayed and sold France. Every one had changed places or opinions. Well may we then insist, without laying ourselves open to exaggeration, on the changeable conduct of the

sovereigns and governments of that day, and on the inconsistency of their alliances and their principles.

The marriage of the Duke of Orleans with either the daughter or the niece of the Emperor had been seriously discussed in 1539; the marriage-portion was to have been either Franche-Comté and the Low Countries, or the Milanese, according to which of the two princesses the Duke should marry; there was the same stipulation previously suggested of the portion lapsing to the Empire in failure of heirs male, and there was moreover an obligation to decide within four months which of the two princesses should be chosen. The Treaty of Crespy-en-Laonnais renewed this engagement. The condition, however, which was to place indirectly one or the other of these territories in the hands of a French prince came to nothing, as the Duke of Orleans died within the term when the agreement should have been executed.[1]

Charles V, in signing the Treaty of Crespy, realized an idea he had long cherished; and his reasons for concluding it remained the same. Germany and Turkey, the state of his health and of his finances, as well as the desire to settle the succession, occupied his mind far more than any

[1] M. Gachard has recently published a small work entitled *Trois Années de la Vie de Charles-Quint* (1543-1546); composed to a great extent out of the despatches of the Venetian ambassador Navagero, which belong to the Imperial Library at Vienna.

idea as to what glory or what profit he could obtain by continuing the war with France.

Francis I. also felt the approach of age; he was ill and out of heart—he had but two more years to live. On four different occasions he had attempted to reconquer the Milanese territory either by invasion or by some grand feat of arms, and his efforts had been foiled by the superior force or skill of his rival. The Dauphin was not in favour of the treaty; but the other influences by which the monarch was surrounded had become, like himself, reconciled to the idea of peace. He could not foresee that the death of the Duke of Orleans would occur at a time exactly to deprive his family of an increase of territory secured to him by the treaty, either in the south or the north of his own kingdom. The Treaty of Crespy differed in two essential points from the truce signed at Nice; it had a definite character, and by it France made restitution of the possessions it had taken from the Duke of Savoy.

VI.

THIS was the last treaty which was signed between Charles V. and Francis I. Coming, as it did, at the end of their fourth and last war, it modified, as we have seen, the state of their possessions in a conditional manner, inasmuch as it ceded the Milanese to a French prince as the husband of a

princess of the imperial family. This condition, however, was not fulfilled, and the territorial position of affairs in Italy between France and Austria was no more altered by this arrangement than by the treaties which preceded it.

The active and busy career of Charles V. is remarkable in this respect, that from his youth to his latter years his general character and his policy did not alter. In his youth, as in his riper age, his mode of action and the qualities of his mind were always the same. At all the epochs of his life he was attentive, laborious, far-sighted; he was slow both in his preparations and in his decisions; he was sufficiently active in attending to the details of the moment, and to those which caused any anxiety for the future. His physical habits were modified. As he advanced in years, as he became weaker and his health failed, he took a greater personal liking for war. At the beginning of his reign, he was present neither at the battle of Pavia nor at the Bicoque: he himself did not conduct the campaign against Clement VII. It was only later that he bore arms against the Turk, and against the people of Barbary, and that he went to Tunis. It was later still that he took part in the war against France in the north; and he himself undertook the campaign against the princes in Germany. There was a change, so to speak, in his physical temperament: his intellectual character was not modified by age. He always displayed a mixture of firmness

and of hesitation; his courage was joined with prudence, and his tenacity was extreme, while his cautious and reserved mind was almost always watchful and attentive. Everything would indicate that his long and early sufferings induced him to make preparations beforehand for the termination of his own reign, and the transmission of his power, and, so to speak, for the winding up of his accounts. This great operation comprehended many different objects: it required much care and attention to matters of detail. As regarded Italy, he could only guarantee the actual state of affairs by making peace with France; for there were no other means by which he could restrain the ambition of his rival in that country. By such a peace, he obtained the triple advantage of preventing that power from giving active assistance to the Sultan, and in the same degree discouraged his projects, while he set free his own forces to deal with Germany. The career of Francis I. was drawing to its close, and Charles V. thought that the rivalry of the two crowns was a personal one between that monarch and himself. He still had to occupy himself with the political condition of Germany, with the war against the princes, intimately connected, as it was, with the fate of the Reformation and with the proposed meeting of the Council. He had to think, moreover, of the marriage of his son, and of the settlement of the conditions on which his abdication would depend; and lastly, he had

to define the relations between the Low Countries and the Empire.

He had, therefore, still to undertake and bring to a close a great military expedition, and he had political and domestic state affairs of the highest moment to arrange. This phase, which we may almost call the last of his career, during which he had to turn his attention, at the same time, to matters of very various interests, embraces as much as the last ten years of his reign. He devoted himself to these subjects with mature judgment, hiding the drift of his purpose in the depths of his own mind, with his eyes fixed on the actual condition of the political horizon, on the destiny of the Empire and of his own family, and on the future of his own reputation.

Events did not come to pass exactly as he desired, and the last transactions of his public life had by no means the success he had endeavoured to secure.

At certain intervals of time, and on certain occasions, he had intended to make his son the heir to all his dominions. His brother Ferdinand, King of the Romans, and the Imperial Electors were, however, adverse to this scheme: the one from personal motives, the others from distrust of Spain and of a Spanish emperor. Charles V. pressed the point once more, and then gave way. It is difficult to determine the exact epoch when he ceased to urge the election of his son as Emperor; but the date of

this change in his opinion matters little. His final determination was to divide his possessions between his son and his brother.

The campaigns in Germany began with triumphs, but ended with disasters. They commenced the long series of religious struggles in Europe, and they closed the career of Charles V. : his sufferings and his infirmities forced him to bring them to an end. This war was no exception to the general rule of those wars which have for their pretext or for their object the extirpation of new doctrines ; the character of the war was not simple, and the plea which was put forth for it was not honest. In his struggle against the Reformation, Charles V. had for his associates some of the Protestant princes, and the Reformed worship was performed in his camp. The truth was that more than one idea was at stake, and there were other interests besides those of religion to be defended. The Reformation, while preaching the emancipation of men's consciences, gave to the people the taste for freedom of the mind in all directions wheresoever its activity or its curiosity could penetrate ; and, in the opinion of the ruling powers, the Reformation menaced their political establishment quite as much as the religious establishment of the Church. The intelligence of man does not stop when it once begins to work, and when it believes in its right to examine. Charles V, as we have already said, on seeing the spread of the Reformation in Germany, was as

much, or perchance more, alarmed as Emperor than he was grieved as a believer. Viewed in a political light, the war in Germany had the same character as his other expeditions: they were all undertaken to set up the great modern principle of unity, at the expense of the independence of the middle ages; that is to say, he wished to strengthen and tighten the bond of allegiance between the princes and their sovereign in Germany, without making at the same time any concession to the masses, and without permitting the people to expect any amelioration of its lot for the future. When he waged war against the Protestant princes, he did not expressly announce himself, as Philip II. did after him, as the enemy of the Reformation. Charles said to them: "Men's consciences are free, but the political rights of the Empire must be respected." The princes on their side answered: "We respect the rights of the Emperor, but we demand that men's consciences be free." If on both parts this language had been honest, it is evident that the war would have had no object.

The question, however, had other sides.

The Germany of the middle of the sixteenth century bore no resemblance to the states in the more western part of Europe. Germany had made less progress: she had not gone through the same social transformation as France, England, Spain, and Italy. The condition of the peasant with regard to the landed proprietors,—of the great lords with

reference to the sovereign,—had not undergone in Germany the same changes. No emperor previous to Charles V. had been powerful enough to subjugate the great feudal families. Germany had not, like France, passed through the discipline of personal unity under Louis XI, nor the long travail which resulted in the distribution of power in England; nor had it seen the triumph of the Spanish monarchy over the Moors and over rival parties. In Germany, the sixteenth century corresponded with the fifteenth, or even with the fourteenth century of other countries. The insurrection of the Swabian peasants represents the Jacquerie in France, much as the struggle of Charles V. with the Protestant chiefs resembles the struggle between the French and English monarchs with the princes of the blood and the barons.

But the German princes had a resource and an auxiliary which were wanting to the French and to the English of the preceding age. The auxiliary to whom the princes were indebted for safety in their struggle with Charles V. was the Reformation. Hence arise the apparent contradictions in this war, and the difficulty which we frequently find in distinguishing whether it was feudal or religious in its character.

We must remember that Charles V. tried for some time to come to an understanding with the Reformers which should somehow satisfy his Catholic conscience. He undertook the war when this

attempted understanding was found to be impossible; but, granting that he carried it on with consummate bravery, he still leads us to believe that, whether it arose from political moderation or religious indecision, he only aimed at obtaining an incomplete result, and that, with an armed force to back him, he still preferred treating with the Reformers to utterly destroying them. Unless this were so, we must say that Charles V. was neither able nor fortunate. He accepted the services of one who was himself a Protestant, and the son-in-law of one of the two leaders of the League,—of Maurice of Saxony, famous for his capacity and his ambition, and notorious for his subsequent treachery. It would not have been a bad calculation to make use of such a man, had he only asked to take the place of the Elector of Saxony, whom the war had deprived of his dominions. But Maurice's aim was also to become the head of the League; and thus, after having acted as general to the Emperor, he became his most redoubtable enemy.

The military association of Charles V. with Maurice would seem to prove that the war was not purely religious in its character: but this was not the only strange part of this expedition and of this epoch. The war against the Reformation, sanctioned by a prince of the reformed faith, was not sanctioned by the Pope; the Emperor wished the Council to be held at Trent, while the Pope wished it to be held at Bologna: each desired to

have it in his own neighbourhood. Still further, when Charles V. had gained a great victory over the princes at Mühlberg, and had taken the leader of the League prisoner and deprived him of his possessions, he concluded with the Protestants—with the full assent of Maurice—a provisional arrangement, under the name of the "*Interim:*" an arrangement which satisfied no one in either of the two religious camps. The Court of Rome received it with strong disapprobation; while on the part of the Reformers, it was soon followed and surpassed by the memorable "Recess of Augsburg," which recognised the liberty of the two faiths. This act destroyed at one blow the hopes, and even the vestiges of the long negotiations undertaken by the Emperor with the Reformers. It also destroyed the effect of the military successes with which his German war had commenced.

In this war, which was important from the time it lasted, from the force of the armies engaged in it, and from the results which it produced, Charles V, infirm and sinking under his sufferings, displayed extraordinary courage; but he was deficient in the most ordinary foresight. Alone and without troops, he had retired into the Tyrol, so as to be near at hand to watch the Council at Trent, and here he was nearly surprised by Maurice. He was forced, ill as he was, to escape by torchlight, in a litter, from Innspruck into the mountains, in the midst of terrible weather. The sovereign of so many

states, an Emperor who had so often been victorious, the master of Europe, must then have made some unpleasant reflections on the past. When he found fortune and his own forces fighting against him, he must have doubtless regretted that he had delayed so long making peace with France, and that he had begun the war with Germany so late.

After long and troublesome negotiations, he signed the Peace of Passau with the Protestants. The correspondence published by Dr. Lanz gives us all the original details. The letters addressed by Charles V. to his brother Ferdinand and to his sister Mary, are those of an obstinate, fidgety, temporizing, and undecided man, who allowed events to gain upon him, and tried in vain to induce Maurice to make a treaty, the most important condition of which imposed upon the Emperor himself a sacrifice—the release of his prisoner the Landgrave of Hesse. This extensive series of letters would tire the patience of the reader, were it not interesting to learn all that relates to a person who played so great a part, and to penetrate into the deepest recesses of his thoughts.

The Treaty of Passau was concluded by Charles very much against the grain; because the Protestant princes, with the aid of so able a man as Maurice of Saxony, had extended their influence over a larger territory, and had strengthened their

position both as parties in the war, and as representatives of a certain creed; and because the Emperor, who was no longer strong enough to bear up against disease, despaired of offering any further resistance, and preferred making peace to continuing the war in Germany, which must have been carried on in his name either by the Marquis of Marignan or by the Duke of Alba.

King Henry II. had taken part in the war, and had occupied Lorraine, together with the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun; Charles V. committed a great fault—in this respect imitating Charles the Bold before Neuss—by obstinately continuing the siege of Metz, which in the end he was obliged to raise, after having begun it at a wrong time, and with insufficient resources. He then returned to Brussels, carried in a litter, worn out with fatigue, pale, and with shattered nerves,—so say his historians,—but full of courage, and firm even to the end.

The events of this campaign did not amount to a disaster, and Charles V, although he failed in his object against Protestant Germany, still maintained a grand position. His losses were great without being ruinous. The years which preceded his abdication were marked by events of a nature more painful to the feelings of Charles V. than damaging to his power. Deserted by Maurice, Charles had been forced to fly at his approach; he released his prisoners without any actual ransom, and without

any moral compensation; he saw the Diet of Augsburg adopt the "Recess," which conceded freedom to both forms of religion, and he witnessed the dispersion of the members of the Council of Trent: perhaps he may have felt some remorse for having, by the "*Interim*," taken the initiative in a measure of conciliation which the Protestants declined. He assuredly must have regretted his attempt to besiege Metz. We must conclude that Charles V, blinded by his prosperity and his glory, presumed too much on his star; and, thinking himself still in the vigour of his age, he overtaxed his strength. The religious motive of the war which he undertook in Germany was no excuse. The history of that war and that of his whole life teach us that ambition, rather than conscience, was his guide.

Twelve years had then elapsed since he had seen Spain.

We have indicated the settlement of the succession and of the affairs in Germany among the matters which Charles V. intended to have arranged before his abdication. He did not succeed in carrying out his wishes in the execution of either of these projects: he renounced the idea of leaving the Empire to his son, and he failed in his attempts to put down the Protestant princes.

Two other objects occupied his attention, the marriage of his son and the organization of the connexion of the Low Countries with Germany. This second point was arranged as he had wished, and

long before his last military enterprise. The circle of Burgundy was constituted under the protection of the Empire; it was agreed that under that name the Low Countries should have a representative and a vote at the Diet; that they should contribute their share to the finances and to the military contingent, preserving at the same time their own laws and their own jurisdiction. This constitution was the consequence of the Treaties of Madrid and of Cambrai, treaties dictated by a victorious prince, and under which France had been deprived of her ancient suzerainty over Flanders and Artois. No one was satisfied with this resolution of the Emperor: neither Germany, which found she had an additional associate, nor the Low Countries, which found themselves obliged to pay contributions and to furnish recruits. The Emperor Maximilian had wished to establish these same relations, and had failed.

The marriage of Philip of Spain with Mary, the daughter of Henry VIII, was almost the last political act of Charles's reign. This union was not popular in England, where Philip did not succeed in making himself more liked than he was elsewhere. Charles V. hoped by this means to strengthen his position in the Low Countries, and he lived long enough to see the Earl of Pembroke land an English army on the continent destined to assist the troops of the King of Spain against France.

VII.

CHARLES V. did not abdicate all at once. He first of all resigned his kingdom of Naples, then the sovereignty of the Low Countries, then Spain, and lastly the Empire. The epoch of his abdication and of his retirement from the world is perhaps that portion of all his life which has been studied with the greatest interest, because it is the most original, and because generally sovereigns do not abdicate excepting when they are forced to this step by misfortune or by death. We may say that Charles V. almost throughout his life cherished the idea of not dying in possession of power. At the age of thirty-five, after his victory at Tunis, at the time of his greatest glory, this idea had already entered his mind. He thought of it again before the last wars in which he was engaged, when the malady under which he had suffered almost all his life had made fearful ravages in his constitution. His career would have been more complete and more pure, had he retired from public life before the death of Francis I, and before the German wars; had he been able, by seeing into futurity, to sacrifice his victories at Ingolstadt and of Mühlberg, and had he thus avoided the Treaty of Passau, the flight from Innspruck, the "Recess" of Augsburg, and the raising of the siege of Metz.

The historian is, therefore, authorized to say, that

in the case of Charles V, the determination to abdicate was not inspired by satiety of power, or dislike of public affairs, nor yet by mere despondency: his resolution arose from the gradual sinking of his physical strength, and from bodily pain. He could not have gone through another campaign like that in Lorraine; and it required the possession of superior energy and will for Charles, who was unable to walk and suffering great pain, to have persevered as he did in this undertaking.

His retreat was conducted slowly, like most of the actions of his life.

The address he made, on the day when he abdicated his sovereignty in the Low Countries, may be said to resume his whole career. He spoke of himself with more sensibility than he generally showed, as a man who was bidding adieu to a brilliant past, who had no further object save to be forgotten of the world; who parted from it with regret, and only because he could no longer live and act in it, and because repose had now become his first want. This address was concluded with difficulty, but with dignity; without any affectation of modesty; in a tone of grandeur, of truth, and of simplicity which befitted the greatest personage of the age. This scene was enacted with an amount of feeling greater than Charles V. was accustomed to show himself, and greater than he had generally the faculty of producing in others.

Months passed before the preparations for his embarkation were finished, and, if we must say so, before the funds necessary for his journey were collected. The want of money, which he had felt in his most important military expeditions, pursued him in the arrangements for his final departure.

The recent works of Messrs. Mignet, Gachard, Stirling, and Pichot, have initiated us in all the details of Charles's life at the Monastery of Yuste.[1] He lived there about two years.

During the first months of his residence in the monastery he greatly applauded the resolution he had taken. His house had been fitted up with every luxury conducive to comfort, and without display; care had been taken to have everything that could soothe the sufferings of a sick person, and charm the vacant hours of one unable to move. The number of his household was considerable; the gardens spacious; the climate just such as suited his health; the site undulating and delicious.

But Charles V. had gone to Yuste to seek for an enforced repose, not for leisure for thought. His body was more infirm than his mind was worn by work. His plans had been laid with a view to an irremediable physical malady, and not with the hope of recovery. At the end of a year, the absence of all fatigue, the calmness of solitude, the softness of the climate, occasionally procured him the agreeable but embarrassing surprise of a return of health,

[1] See also the *Quarterly Review*, December 1852, p. 107, &c.

which had never entered into his calculation, and which, perhaps, was the cause of trouble in his arrangements. He never dreamt of quitting the monastery to return into the world; but it was said that he then had some idea of a short expedition to the Pyrenees, respecting the affairs of Navarre. With Charles V, retirement from the world, to ensure exemption from a state of impatience and anxiety, required, if one may say so, the pressure of suffering. His was not one of those tender natures, easily fatigued, which, after having been tried by the struggles of the world, give themselves up readily to a quiet life without the fear of *ennui*; such natures may be content to live on the memory of the past, and may find in lassitude itself a melancholy charm. It was well enough for Charles V, as a harassed and sickly traveller, to withdraw from active life into the seclusion and silence of a cloister, to recall the events of his own life, to ask whether he could have done better, and thus to prepare for death. But when his strength appeared to return, the memories of his former active life rose up to trouble him, and it became almost a necessity to him again to take part in the affairs of Europe. And in fact his inaction and isolation were far from being complete. Portugal, Navarre, Spain, occupied his attention rather than more distant countries. When Philip II. gained the victory of St. Quentin, Charles V, full of respect for the crown which he himself had borne, and for

the person of the sovereign, veiled the reproaches he made to his son for his absence from the battle, in discreet and kindly words. The sisters of Charles V, the Queen Mary of Hungary, and Eleanora—the latter the widow of the King of Portugal and of Francis I,—paid him a visit; and their stay at the monastery was a source of great pleasure to him. The conversation of these three persons, at that solemn hour,—of persons whose lives had been so full of incident,—would, if it could have been preserved, be most curious and instructive to us. Two among them were endowed with remarkable intelligence. Eleanora was affectionate and gentle-minded, but she had neither the intelligence nor the courage of her sister. It had been her curious fate to marry her brother's military and political rival; but she had taken little part and felt little sympathy with public affairs, and she rejoined her own family after the death of the King her husband. Both these princesses died in Spain, not indeed at Yuste, but during the time their brother lived in that monastery.

Charles V. received ambassadors at the monastery, and kept up a correspondence with the world. When at sunset he was carried on to a terrace constructed for the purpose, that he might thence enjoy the beauties of nature, he was delighted to breathe the balmy air, because it was beneficial to his health. There he reflected on the letters he had received,

and the visits and occurrences of the day: these things occupied him more than the glow of the sinking sun, the southern splendour of the landscape, or the distant outline of the mountains of Estramadura.

Charles V. is the most distinguished person in history who marks the beginning of modern warfare and modern politics. He closes most distinctly the long period, so romantic and so confused, which constitutes the middle ages,—a condition of society which did not end without a struggle, but which languished for many years, and changed its character before its final extinction.

Charles V. was born at Ghent: his father was of German extraction, and his mother was Spanish. At first he was not studious, and his abilities in his youth were by no means remarkable; his constitution was not good, and did not give promise of bearing any great strain; his countenance was intelligent, although his features were heavy and irregular; he was measured, and even slow in his movements; while he was silent, serious, calm, and thoughtful in his appearance. During the whole course of his life his temperament never varied: his head was always master of his heart, and tinged its feelings with a certain coldness; his will was strong, but slow; his intelligence profound rather than quick; his dominant qualities were patience, a tenacity of purpose, and a prudence which sometimes looked too much to details; his self-control

rarely failed him, either in prosperity, or in misfortune and peril. He could devote attention to deliberations, however interminable and fruitless; he could conceal his joy or his grief, and dissemble his power; he could keep his schemes hidden from all the world, and assume an appearance of weakness when there was danger in being too strong; he could concentrate all his faculties on politics, and make everything bend to that. In comparison with such an object, he loved nothing ardently; no amusement, no pleasure of the imagination or the mind, no man or woman, not even war, could tear him from this one absorbing pursuit. He was neither intoxicated by success nor depressed by failure, and he thus escaped the double danger of elation or despair, which so frequently prevent men securing their gains or repairing their losses. When we see that Charles V. bore no resemblance to his father nor to his grandfather, and that we can trace no likeness to him in his own son, and still less in any one of his distant descendants, we are tempted to say that he was specially destined, in his person, his character, and his faculties, to be the representative and the defender of a colossal power which before him had no existence. He did not found it, but received, maintained, and increased it. After him it was forthwith divided, because it was obviously too large for any other single person to administer; and subsequently, the important fractions into which it had been partitioned were still

further diminished by the want of ability of those who succeeded to them. Charles V. did not receive from nature all the gifts nor all the charms she can bestow, nor did experience give him every talent; but he was equal to the part he had to play in the world. He was sufficiently great to keep his many-jewelled diadem. In fine, even reckoning the faults and the misfortunes of that old age which came so early upon him, the gigantic monarchy of which for thirty years he was the head did not decline under his management. In spite of a certain slowness in being convinced, and a certain dilatoriness in deciding, he showed that he possessed durable and solid qualities, some of which were altogether wanting, or existed but feebly, in William III, in Louis XIV, and in Frederick II,—men of whom some were greater than Charles V. His ambition was cold and wise. The scope of his ideas, which are not quite easy to divine, was vast enough to control a state composed of divers and distant portions, so as to make it always very difficult to amalgamate his armies and to supply them with food, or to procure money. Indeed its very existence would have been exposed to permanent danger from powerful coalitions, had Francis I. known how to place its most vulnerable points under a united pressure from the armies of France, of England, of Venice, and of the Ottoman Empire. Charles V. attained his first object when he prevented the French monarch from taking possession

of the inheritance of the house of Anjou at Naples, and of that of the Viscontis at Milan. He was more successful in stopping the march of Solyman into Austria than in checking the spread of the Reformation in Germany. The sentiment which the whole of his career inspires—his passive courage, the solid qualities of his mind, his patient endurance of delay, of work, and of suffering—is rather one of serious esteem rather than of lively admiration. We feel respect rather than sympathy.

Charles V. had four objects very much at heart: he wished to be the master in Italy, to check the progress of the Ottoman power in the west of Europe, to conquer the King of France, and to govern the Germanic body by dividing it, and by making the Reformation a religious pretext for oppressing the political defenders of that belief. In three out of four of these objects he succeeded. Germany alone was not conquered: if she was beaten in battle, neither any political triumph nor any religious results ensued. In Germany, Charles V. began his work too late, and acted too slowly; he undertook to subdue it at a time when the abettors of the Reformation had grown strong, when he himself was growing weaker.

If this realization of his schemes and of his wishes were incomplete, the fault lay neither with the wisdom of his political ideas, nor with his own firmness or courage. We must attribute it rather to the ravages which disease had made in his constitu-

tion, to the decay of his physical strength, and consequently to the defect which pervaded his character all through life—of hesitating beyond measure before he acted, of being unnecessarily slow in the preparation of his undertaking, and of letting his opponents, over whom he wished to triumph, consolidate their power under his very eyes. We are not to conclude from these observations that, had Charles V. been more vigorous and younger, he would have repressed and stopped the Reformation. But he certainly would have directed affairs with a more vigorous hand with respect to Maurice, and would not have allowed the victory of Mühlberg, and his first triumphs over the Protestants, to have ended in the humiliating flight from Innspruck, or in the disastrous campaign of Lorraine.

Like many other brilliant careers, the career of Charles V. was more successful and more striking at the commencement and the middle, than at the end, of its course. At Madrid, at Cambrai, at Nice, he made his rival bow down his head. At Crespy he again forced him to obey his will; but, as he had completely made up his mind to have peace, Charles dictated it, in some manner, to his own detriment. At Passau he had to yield to the terms of his enemy—of an enemy whom Charles V. encountered in his old age, and when his powers had decayed.

Although it may be said that the extent and the power of the sovereignty which Charles V. left

to his successor at his death were not diminished, still his armies were weakened, his finances were exhausted, and the country was weary of the tyranny of the imperial lieutenants. The supremacy of the empire in Germany, for which he had struggled so much, was as little established at the end as at the beginning of his reign; religious unity was solemnly destroyed by the "Recess" of Augsburg.

But that which marks the position of Charles V. as the representative man of his epoch, and as the founder of the policy of modern times, is that, wherever he was victorious, the effect of his success was to crush the last efforts of the spirit of the middle ages, and of the independence of nations. In Italy, in Spain, in Germany, and in the Low Countries, his triumphs were so much gain to the cause of absolute monarchy and so much loss to the liberty derived from the old state of society. Whatever was the character of liberty in the middle ages—whether it were contested or incomplete, or a mockery—it played a greater part than in the four succeeding centuries. Charles V. was assuredly one of those who contributed the most to found and consolidate the political system of modern governments.

His history has an aspect of grandeur. Had Francis I. been as sagacious in the closet as he was bold in the field, by a vigorous alliance with England, with Protestant Germany, and with some of the republics of Italy, he might perhaps have

balanced and controlled the power of Charles V. But the French monarch did not possess the foresight and the solid understanding necessary to pursue such a policy with success. His rival, therefore, occupies the first place in the historical picture of the epoch. Charles V. had the sentiment of his position and of the part he had to play. He was capable of taking large views, and of entertaining liberal sentiments, even when he was undecided and most painstaking; the slowness of his proceedings, which more than once was injurious to his cause, adds, perchance, to the majesty of the spectacle of his reign, and to the grandeur of its glory.

PRINTED documents on the reign of Charles V. abound now. The recent publications of Messrs. Weiss, Le Glay, Gachard, Aimé Champollion, and of Dr. Lanz, give important information as to the diplomacy, the wars, the domestic policy, the alliances, the character, and the schemes of Charles V, the captivity of Francis I, and the troubles of Ghent. The documents touching the Austrian negotiations at the beginning of the sixteenth century have been published by M. Le Glay; these, with the state papers of Cardinal de Granvelle, edited by M. Weiss, and the collection of papers relating to the captivity of Francis I, published by M. Aimé Champollion, form part of the collection of inedited documents concerning the history of France. The correspondence of Charles V, the originals of which belong in great part to the Library of Burgundy, has been collected and edited by Dr. Lanz. This publication contains a mass of precious documents touching the diplomatic transactions of Charles V.'s reign, and more especially concerning the negotiations with Maurice of Saxony and the Congress of Passau; these papers consist chiefly of letters from the Emperor himself, from his brother, from the Queen of Hungary; and they teach us many facts which not only concern the events of that time, but which also illustrate the character and the ways of the Emperor. The works of

Messrs. Alexandre Henne, Gachard, and Theodore Juste, upon the reign of Charles V, are remarkable for their conscientious erudition and impartiality. M. Gachard has written an essay on the captivity of Francis I.; he has republished an essay on the troubles of Ghent, preceded by an introduction, and followed by a voluminous collection of original matter. M. Gachard has also published a series of despatches written by the ambassadors from Venice, on the affairs of the Emperor, and on his retirement at Yuste: the first volume of this work consists of a narrative full of interest. These various publications give the last information on the subjects under discussion, as might be expected when we consider the reputation of the author.

The Commentaries of Charles V, of which one version in Portuguese has been discovered by M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, in the collection of manuscripts at the Library of Paris, had long been the object of search in the libraries of Europe. Many facts, many sayings of Charles V. made it clear that these Commentaries existed, or at any rate that they had once existed, and there was no evidence that they had been destroyed. These Commentaries have no very great historical value. The work by no means comes up to the expectations raised by its title, and its author: nor does it fulfil the promises which tradition had held out on this subject. The Commentaries contain only a sort of journal of the first years, and indeed of the greater

part, of the Emperor's reign: they become more circumstantial only when the campaigns of Germany—those which he led in person—are narrated; and they are for all this epoch almost exclusively military. As a general rule, they are written in a calm tone, and bear no trace of ill-humour, not even when events are related which would be most likely to excite the Emperor's anger. They present matters in a true light, with certain modifications, the object of which was to make the events appear in a light the most favourable to the policy of the author. In the composition of his Commentaries, as in many other acts of his life, Charles V. was intensely occupied with the future of his reputation and of his glory.

Besides the interesting work on the retirement and death of Charles V, M. Mignet has published a series of articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, on the Election to the Empire, on the Constable de Bourbon, and on the Peace of Madrid. Like all the works of the author, these articles display the most eminent qualities; and in them he has made use of documents taken for the most part from the Archives of Vienna and of Paris.

The memoirs of Fleuranges, of Comines, of Guise, and of the two Du Bellays, as well as the Commentaries of Montluc, give us a sufficient insight into the military events of the reign of Francis I. and of the beginning of that of Henry II.

It would not perhaps be easier now to write a

complete history of the reign of Charles V. than it was in the time of Robertson and of Leti; but with the aid of these new materials, numerous and important as they are, a nearer approach to the truth in all that concerns the person and the affairs of the Emperor could be made than was the case when those two historians wrote.

It is probable that the archives which have furnished the rich collection of documents lately published on the subject of the sixteenth century are not yet quite exhausted; and that those deposited at Madrid, at Simancas, at Besançon, at Lille, at Paris, at Vienna, and at Brussels, still contain inedited materials for a history of that epoch, and of the men who directed public affairs, especially of Charles V. It is impossible to examine too carefully into all that concerns a person so considerable that the smallest details about him are important; more especially as the reserve and discretion of his character were so great that his thoughts on public affairs, and the motives of his own acts, have never been completely revealed. For example, we have the most detailed information on the troubles of Ghent, and on the negotiations for the Treaty of Passau,—two occasions in which the action of the Emperor was most direct and personal. Nevertheless it is impossible to tell exactly what passed in the mind of Charles V. in the interval between his journey across France and the rupture of the Treaty of Nice, or between the rup-

ture of that Treaty and the Peace of Crespy. We cannot guess what was the whole scope of his views on a state of affairs which was evidently the subject of long and profound reflection with him; and during a time when, more than perhaps at any other phase of his life, he pondered over the general tendency of European politics and of the events of his reign. The habitual taste for these general surveys of his epoch and his life, so characteristic of Charles V, can be accounted for by the depth of his mind, the meditative turn of his intellect, and those long and early maladies which accustomed him at an early period to look upon his end as near at hand, and to occupy himself with a future which was passing out of his control.

The negotiations previous to the Congress of Passau, the military and political struggle of Charles V. with Maurice of Saxony, who had been his general, and who owed his power as much to the confidence which the Emperor had reposed in him as to his own individual activity, must have occupied Charles's mind most painfully. The portion of his correspondence which concerns these events is very extensive, and, although the letters of Charles V. enter into great detail, they do not give us the key to his conduct. In this matter, which was so important to him, and which tarnished his glory and embittered the latter years of his existence, it appears from his own letters that he followed his sister's and his brother's advice,

rather than that he himself directed the course of matters under discussion.[1] We shall probably never know what were his motives or his views on these important and decisive circumstances of his reign. But the knowledge of numerous facts, even if they be of secondary value, enables us at any rate to form conjectures as to what determined the conduct of an individual whose name occupies the best part of half a century memorable in history, and who, owing to his enormous power, and the immense influence he exercised over his own as well as over subsequent times, is himself the more interesting to know and to study, because he never revealed his most inmost thoughts either in the intimacy of private conversation or in his letters.

[1] Dr. Lanz, *Correspondence de Charles-Quint.*

III.

PHILIP II. AND WILLIAM THE SILENT.

I.

NATIONS do not always follow a regular course in their social development. Succeeding ages bring forth incessant social changes: at times, we see communities of men united in great masses or divided into small groups; we see them obey rulers whose power extends over vast populations, or subordinated to influences purely local—sometimes they follow some slow impulse, and climb, as it were, some steep ascent, or suddenly undergo some unexpected change. The history of the world, both ancient and modern, does not develop itself in a symmetrical manner, without accidents or relapses; upward tendencies are subject to temporary derangements, and the periods of decline and prostration are occasionally broken by days of hope and encouragement.

But, if this is the case with the general history of the world, it may be said that the history of the great states of Western Europe, from the middle ages to modern times—from the origin of the feudal

system down to the sixteenth century,—has proceeded in one uninterrupted course. The feudal element, which, when once installed, ruled society with more or less vigour in different countries during a series of centuries, continued gradually to lose its influence more or less rapidly: that is to say, that the territory, and therefore the power, became less and less divided, and the groups over which a single individual exercised authority became more considerable in extent, and fewer in number. Property was concentrated: wars broke out between vassals, who became more and more powerful; later still, between princes of the same family; and at last between the sovereigns of great states. Then arose a larger system of general policy, and the rulers of nations no longer contended for the possession of a castle, of a province, nor even of the territory of a kingdom; they struggled for European preponderance.

The rivalry between Charles V. and Francis I. was of this character, and they were the first in modern Europe who had such an object in view. Charles V, the conqueror in the conflict, was the first prince who attained it. His predominance was evident in Europe: but it is not possible to attribute it to any one of his various possessions, whether they were Italian, Flemish, African, or Indian. It depended at once on the extent of his dominions, on the success of his warlike enterprises in Italy and in Africa, on the care with which he

preserved all parts of his enormous inheritance from the attacks of his enemies, on his good fortune, as well as on his personal superiority.

Nature had endowed him with prudence and foresight; and long before his death, as we have already said, he was tormented by the fear that none other hand but his could, in future times, direct such various interests, govern realms so distant from each other, resist so many enemies, and, in the government of such vast possessions, reconcile so many conflicting ambitions. The gloomy warnings of disease, the idea of finishing his days in retirement, and the care of regulating the succession, occupied his mind for some time; and various vast projects, such as would present themselves to an intelligence of so high an order, and during so great a crisis, absorbed his attention. He doubted which was the best European organization to establish after his death; and, many years before he abdicated, he thought of reconstituting, in imitation of Burgundy, an independent state in the north; for he believed that a monarchy which included Spain, Northern and Southern Italy, and the hereditary provinces of Austria, would be more homogeneous, less vulnerable, and stronger in Germany; while a kingdom well placed between France and England, possessing family ties and interests with the two maritime powers, would allow the imperial inheritance to become more compact and solid, instead of being a cause of weakness.

This idea was not carried out, because it depended on projected alliances which were not contracted; and of all these vast plans, Charles V, in his last years, only preserved the resolution of separating the imperial crown from the rest of his dominions.

He had not the strength to carry out all he had undertaken in order to leave his son a succession free of embarrassments and perils, so as to enable him to terminate the war with France by a more successful campaign than that of Lorraine, and to make a better arrangement with the Protestants in Germany than the Treaty of Passau. He would fain have rendered his heir aware of the dangers menacing the crown; there were his unsubdued enemies to be kept in check, his subjects to be managed, and his own inclinations to be controlled.

In spite of all this, and of all external and internal difficulties,—in spite of the large reduction which the separation of the empire of Germany from Spain had caused in his inheritance,—the King of Spain, with Milan and the kingdom of Naples, the Low Countries, Franche-Comté, Africa, and the Indies, was still the most considerable sovereign in Europe, and the will of Philip II. was certainly the most powerful among the princes of his time. His reign, which corresponds to the second half of the sixteenth century, may justly be named the Spanish period.

In order to judge the successor of Charles V, we must consider what were the elements of power

which he had at his disposal when he came to the throne, and what use he made of them.

Apart from the war against the Sultan, Charles V. had conceived three great military enterprises in Europe: these were the war in Italy, the war with France, and that with Germany. The first might be regarded as ended, for the two Italian vice-royalties had continued to belong to Spain, and formed a possession which was but feebly, and only occasionally, disputed in subsequent times. But the war of rivalry with France, which lasted for more than a hundred years after the death of Philip II, was destined to be the basis of the foreign policy of all the eminent men of that country during the seventeenth century; nor do we see that Philip II. ever seriously considered whether he ought to continue or to terminate the struggle. We are ignorant whether the cause had been finally decided even when Henry IV, Richelieu, and Louis XIV. determined to renew it with such ardour,—or whether it was necessary, for the security of the Spanish throne, to sheath the sword, and accept as an established fact the state of Europe as it was left by Charles V. The war between France and Spain, which succeeded the war with England, may be said to have begun with the invasion of Naples by Charles VIII, and to have closed, more than two hundred years afterwards, with the Peace of Utrecht. It was broken off during the whole of Philip II.'s reign,—with the

exception of a few hostilities soon after his accession, and of his intervention in favour of the League,—just as it was afterwards whenever the government in France was feeble or embarrassed, or occupied by secondary interests: then a reconciliation was effected with Spain, and peace was bought, either from timidity, or from neglect of the national welfare, or in order to satisfy some other more futile ambition. Catherine and Mary of Medicis acted thus; and Richelieu, on his first entry into public life, when his first object was to secure the support of the Queen at any sacrifice, did the same.

If we consider only the salient points in history, Philip II. appears as representing in Spain the foreign policy of France as administered by feeble governments. He had the good fortune to reign while France was miserably ruled by the three sons of Henry II, and while England was subjected to the strong, but capricious and miserly, government of Elizabeth. Had the successors of Francis I. been warlike princes, or had the predecessors of Henry IV. and of Richelieu been worthy of them,—had even Henry II. lived somewhat longer,—the son of Charles V. would not have passed, in the solitude and silence of the Escurial, a life occupied only with pondering on the political situation of Europe.

The Spain of Philip II. might have aspired to everything. Her armies were excellent, the best and most inured to warfare in Europe; her territory was larger than that of any other continental

state; and with the facilities given her by her imposing position, she might have contracted the alliances most suited to her. She was strong enough not to fear in the Peninsula itself either the Moors, who had escaped proscription by conversion, or the descendants of those whom the Inquisition had condemned, or the Arragonese, who had been stripped of their privileges. Spanish Italy, under the stern sway of its viceroys, did not attempt to rebel. France, enervated by civil war, was subject to the disgraceful government of the last of the Valois race. In Germany the Reformation had no great military leader; Maurice of Saxony was dead, and the great men of the Thirty Years' War, Bernard of Saxe-Weimar and Gustavus Adolphus, were yet unborn.

Philip II. did not assume for himself an historical mission. He did not inquire whether, in an historical point of view, he had not a part to play for the glory of his name and of his country, or even for the satisfaction of his conscience; nor did he inquire what that part might be. After contemplating the condition of the world around him, and what had already been done before his accession, he proposed to himself no fixed task, whether it were to continue the war of rivalry with France, to maintain the contest in Germany, or to undertake a regular and uninterrupted struggle against the Reformation in Germany, France, and England. He disliked the stir and clash of arms; he took no

part in any military action; he was not present either at the siege of Ostia, or at Gravelines, or at Lepanto, or at any of the subsequent battles of the epoch. During the first years of his reign some generals of renown gained important victories for him, as the Duke of Alva in Italy against the Pope, and Philibert of Savoy and Egmont in Picardy against Henry II. With the latter he signed the peace so advantageous to himself of Cateau-Cambrésis, and he then retired to immure himself for forty years in his palace at the Escurial.[1]

Contemporary statesmen, even of the most vigorous intellect, cannot judge passing events with the decisive accuracy with which posterity will one day appreciate the same circumstances; but they attempt to estimate them as far as they are able, and strive to form correct opinions. Charles V. conceived many projects, planned many enterprises, and passed days and nights in thinking what was the most glorious and the best use to make of his power. His son was not tormented by such grave thoughts or anxieties. His system was to take the sole management of all his possessions, without ever disclosing the principle which guided him, or

[1] In the immense palace of the Escurial the traveller is still shown the two plain and very small rooms inhabited by Philip II. One is his study, lighted by one window, looking into the church; the other is the room where he died. In the study is shown his writing-table and his arm-chair. The only door of the room opens into a narrow gallery, the walls of which are encrusted from top to bottom with square blue tiles; it was there he received the foreign ambassadors.

moving from his palace. To govern by correspondence; to give tardy orders without explanation or justification; never to permit any one to talk of the future or to give advice; to decide, after a painful deliberation, on all matters without consulting any one but himself; to signify his determination by a marginal note, written on the despatch, which was prolix and almost illegible; to pretend to impose his will on the world by tracing a few lines on paper and dispatching couriers; to glory in his want of information, in his insensibility, in his immobility, in his slowness, and in the exaggeration of all his natural failings—such was the course adopted by Philip II. for preserving, administering, and defending the noble inheritance transmitted to him by his father. In this manner did he occupy the half century which separates his accession from that of his son,—the interval between the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis and that of Vervins,—between the battle of St. Quentin and the battle of Nieuport,—between Spain at the summit of her glory, and Spain vanquished and degraded.

II.

THE apologists of Philip II. often say that Charles V. was as severe against the Reformation as his son; for the former persecuted and burnt the heretics; and the latter, in his most rigorous acts,

only carried into execution his father's edicts. They therefore ask why Charles should be respected while Philip is severely blamed.

It is true that Charles V, Francis I, Ferdinand II, and Richelieu considered it as a duty to combat the Reformation; but they combated it with armies, and with a degree of military frankness: Philip attacked it with the weapons of secret denunciation and torture. The scaffold and the stake were the rule, war the exception. History seems to have forgiven Charles V. for the war against the Protestant League in Germany, and Richelieu for the siege of La Rochelle; but she will never pardon Philip for having substituted the executioner's axe for the sword of the soldier.[1]

We have not been carried away by enthusiasm in our estimate of the character of Charles V, of his government, or of his influence on the society of his time. With regard to his political weight and his personal character, and as sovereign of the Low Countries, there is no sort of comparison to be drawn between the father and the son. An eye-witness of the first development of the Reformation, Charles V. did not allow the religious revolt to spread in his dominions. When the social revolts began, he repressed them with severity and rigour,

[1] Under Charles V. the Inquisition was never established in Brabant, in Luxembourg, in Groningnon, nor in Guelderland. (Report by M. Gachard to the Minister of the Interior at the beginning of *La Correspondance de Philippe II*, p. 125.)

assuming an attitude of firmness and disdain which we are not bound to admire, but which certainly inspires quite a different sentiment from that which we feel for the system of spies organized by Philip II, or for his false promises, his prolonged silence towards all who had any complaint to make, and the perplexity in which he left his agents, while he was hesitating as to the orders he had to give. Charles V. occupied men's minds by warlike enterprises. He confided the government of the Low Countries to two women of great character and of remarkable intelligence, to whom he showed confidence and gratitude. He did not submit the institutions of the provinces to the levelling effects of a foreign despotism: in the midst of the financial embarrassments caused by the necessity of keeping up his armies, it was always to the country itself that he appealed for subsidies. He convoked the States-General above twenty times during his reign, and the life of the two regents was passed and their health destroyed in perpetual struggles with the delegates of the provinces. If Charles V. did not respect the liberty of the subject more than Philip II, at any rate his mode of governing men was very different. He did not consider Spain or the Empire as a mother-country, and treat the Low Countries as a colony; indeed, the Spaniards sometimes complained that too much favour and confidence were shown to the Flemings, to the prejudice of other nationalities;

but, at any rate, he did not in any of the countries under his rule rouse against himself the sentiments which a foreign master inspires. By the affability of his manners, by his habit of travelling, by his knowledge of the institutions and inclinations of his people, by the elevation and breadth of his ideas, by the fineness of his taste, by the European character of his policy, and by his disposition to acknowledge, appreciate, and make use of merit wherever it was to be found, Charles V. rendered it impossible for any one in any part of his dominions to consider him as a foreigner. He was not, like his son, a man of one idea, of one language, and of one residence. The Low Countries reproached him loudly and often with having extracted from them their last crown for his wars. When the insurrection was quelled, the men of Ghent saw the most precious foundations of their municipal liberty changed; but the old forms of the national constitution still remained erect; the organization of the states was not tampered with; authority was confided to skilful and prudent hands; civil and military offices were not filled by Spaniards; and the great families were not deprived of influence, or cut off from the exercise of all authority. The country remained unchanged; the aristocracy were not humiliated, nor was the principle of provincial representation destroyed. After having promulgated rigorous ordinances against the Reformation, after having imposed his iron will on the

people of Ghent, and after having exacted large subsidies from the States-General, Charles V. did not leave the reputation of a despot, and on his retirement was not unpopular.

There is no sort of resemblance between him and his son; the two characters, the two governments, and the destiny created by each for the communities over which they ruled, are totally dissimilar.

If Philip, on ascending the throne, had taken a strong resolution either to make war on France under the Valois, on reformed Germany, or against the Reformation wherever it appeared—had he shown ambition or courage; had he openly followed up his idea, and devoted to it all his resources, all the persistence of his will, all his own faculties and those of his agents, his place in history would have been very different. History respects all sincere and honest convictions, as well as great courage. What history condemns, with perhaps excessive severity, in Philip, is not that he was a conscientious adversary of the Reformation, of the ancient institutions of the Low Countries, or of the independence of Germany, nor even that he was a despot, devoted to the success of a theory. What repels us is the mysterious system pursued by this monarch in the exercise of his power; it is his total want of courage and sincerity in the accomplishment and the open avowal of his most important acts. History reproaches him with having hypocritically and cunningly tampered with the insti-

tutions of his people, instead of having openly abolished them; of having been a conspirator rather than a soldier; of having preferred a civil to a great war, while he avoided taking any personal part in either the one or the other. History bears him a grudge for his contemptible despotism, his cold cruelty, his taste for secret execution, and for his passion for instructions so obscure as to leave the responsibility with those who acted on them, or so contradictory as to embarrass and compromise those who were to carry them out: these are the reasons why history establishes such a difference between the two governments, though both were despotic and severe.

III.

THERE is some analogy between the political situation of France during the reigns of the three predecessors of Henry IV. and that of the Low Countries under Philip. In both countries the Government went through a civil war without any fixed plan. Catherine of Medicis, with far greater ability and clearness of vision than Philip II, succeeded no better than he did in reducing the state into order, and in following a consistent line of policy. With regard to the parties which divided her kingdom she showed as little decision as her son-in-law; and with reference to the Reformation,

she showed still less, because her convictions were not so strong. Had Philip been King of France, he might, like Charles IX, have promoted the murder of Coligny, the Huguenot chief, but he would never, like Henry III, have encouraged the assassination of the Duke of Guise, the head of the League.

Philip II. was not conscious of the changes he was working in the government of the Low Countries. He returned to Spain, after having made peace with France; he impressed upon Margaret of Parma the Regent, upon Granvelle the Prime Minister, and upon the councillors he thought worthy of his confidence, the necessity of strictly enforcing his father's edicts against the Reformation. He did not give a thought to the conditions imposed by the state of society, or of parties; nor to the difference which might result from the existence of peace instead of war, which had prevailed during the lifetime of his predecessor; nor to the character of the institutions, and the position in which they placed the supreme authority; nor yet to the force and disposition of the Reformers. There is nothing in the conduct of the King at this epoch, or in his voluminous and important correspondence, which indicates that he reflected on such matter, that he felt any uneasiness, or that he took any precautions. He thought he had secured order in the provinces by leaving three thousand Spanish troops, and that he had saved the Government from all

embarrassment by giving the nominal authority to Margaret of Parma, Charles' natural daughter, and the real power to Perrenot, the Bishop of Arras, whilst he named as councillors certain members of the high nobility, without functions and without influence.

If we transfer our attention to the state of affairs fifteen years later, when the southern provinces of the Low Countries, after having revolted, still remained in a troubled and disorganized condition—when the northern provinces had in fact separated themselves from the monarchy, and were at work to secure their independence—we shall perceive that, at this point, Philip II. was no longer master of his political conduct, for events had become too strong for him, and no course was left open to him but to defend himself in the best way he could. But in the beginning the game was in his own hands. The higher aristocracy, half ruined by luxury, asked for nothing better than to serve him; French Calvinism had made no progress in the country, because no political faction had solicited its interference; Charles V. had never administered the government for the profit, or with the ideas, of Spain; and that anti-Spanish sentiment, which, without support or alliance with others, sufficed to create enormous difficulties for Philip II, evoked and fomented as they were by his own acts, had not yet appeared in the middle classes, or in the general population. On the morrow of the

Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, no particular grievance existed.

In a short space of time the new Government irritated all parties. It dissatisfied the nobles, by making them feel that the council of state in which they sat had no real influence; while the States-General were displeased at the introduction of fourteen newly-created bishops, who represented the great abbeys of the country, and were to enjoy their revenues.[1] Moreover, the Government alienated the Reformers, by leaving them no alternative between emigration and the scaffold; and irritated the whole of the population by telling them they would be held in subjection by a foreign soldiery, and closely watched by inquisitors, more severe, powerful, and more cordially encouraged and protected than those in the days of Charles V.

The King had no intention of establishing a new system of government; he wished to maintain all things in the situation in which they then were; but he failed to remember that his father had left to the States the exercise of their privileges, to the nobles their functions and their influence, and to the trade and commonalty of the country a security in their proper place. He acted with no particular plan; his only desire was to render the progress of the Reformation impossible, and to execute the edicts of the Emperor by maintaining the Inquisition; but he never perceived that he was substituting

[1] Hitherto only the regular clergy had been eligible for the States.

Spanish despotism in the place of the national institutions. The universal discontent astonished him, because, in the blindness of his own narrow mind, and his want of sympathy with everybody, he had troubled all mankind without knowing it. What proves this is, that he left the Low Countries at the very moment when he was putting everything in peril. Affairs in Spain were certainly less important than those that ought to have caused him to prolong his stay in the Low Countries.

The real head of the Government during the years that immediately followed the departure of Philip was the Bishop of Arras.

Granvelle, under the orders of a great sovereign, would have rendered invaluable assistance. He had full capacity to be a useful servant, and sufficient courage to obey, even in danger; but he did not possess the character necessary for command. In going through the voluminous collection of his State papers, we must confess that, in the midst of a mass of important details, we are struck by the emptiness and sterility of his mind, under the pressure of such heavy responsibility. He never warned or thwarted the King in a serious or resolute manner, although he secretly blamed his policy. With a master of so little foresight as Philip II, and a government possessing such abundant resources, ministers like Amboise, Farnese, Sully, or Mazarin, in Granvelle's place, would have endeavoured to introduce other ideas, and would,

no doubt, have aimed at great things. Granvelle possessed extreme good sense and perspicacity, and he really possessed a spirit of moderation with which he never could inspire Philip. His knowledge of affairs was profound; he was active, ambitious, supple, and cunning, and by no means enterprising. His mind could fathom the intentions of men so well, that it stood him in the stead of a heart, and it made him divine in others the emotions which he was incapable of feeling himself.

William of Nassau, Egmont, and the Governess herself—all those who played a part in the events of that period—those who remained faithful to the monarchy, and those who separated from it for a time or for ever—the staunch friends and the rebels —are all appreciated in his letters with striking truth. He was fertile in small expedients; his activity might have corrected Philip II.'s slowness. He showed himself indifferent to the hatred he inspired, and inaccessible to fear; but he was incapable of independent action; he had no sense of pride, and could not adopt a bold and decisive course. His courage was shown in obeying the will of another; not in carrying out his own. In his dealings with high personages he lacked dignity, self-possession, and even tact. The unpopularity which he brought upon himself, and upon the master whose agent he was, is to be attributed to the defects of his general character; to his low and false nature; to his vulgar avidity for power and credit; to his suspected and

hidden vices. He was sensible enough to see that the augmentation of the number of bishoprics, with a view of rendering the Inquisition more powerful and more efficacious, was an unwise measure ; but, as the Archbishopric of Malines was destined for him, he was not sufficiently unselfish to oppose the scheme. His reason was always struggling with his ambition, and his bad qualities obscured his intelligence. In spite of his docility, he did not succeed in making himself necessary ; and he knew neither how to avert disgrace, nor to accept it with dignity.

Philip II. committed the same mistake as the Valois. In the Low Countries, as in France, the royal power, while combating the tendencies of the aristocracy, without paying much attention to the wants of the country, drove the aristocracy to support the Reformation, and the two parties, before uniting, mutually assisted each other. Civil war raged in the Low Countries and in France, with far greater danger to the royal power, and with greater fury, at a time when the crown was no longer engaged in some great war which contented those who were ambitious, and united them against the foreign enemy.

If, after his Italian campaign, the Duke of Alva, in command of the Spanish armies, had fought against the Duke of Guise, who commanded the armies of Francis II. or of Charles IX, the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the League, as well

as the insurrection in the Low Countries and its sanguinary repression, might have figured differently in history. Philip II. and Catherine of Medicis ought to have comprehended, what was afterwards understood by more enlightened governments, that it is impossible with impunity to arrest the course of a great war when it has once begun, especially at a period when ideas were fermenting, and the spirit of innovation, utterly regardless of consequences, sought to shake to its very foundations the edifice of ancient authority; when the scattered representatives of the spirit of the middle ages were still labouring to resist the progress of modern ideas; and when numbers of the young nobility in France or at Geneva followed the teaching of the Reformers. Between the two parties in France regular battles were fought, and treaties of peace were signed at Amboise, at Lonjumeau, at St. Germain, and at La Rochelle, as between independent and foreign powers. The revolutionists in the Low Countries, whether they were nobles, reformers, or representatives of the old democracy, destroyed, or permitted the destruction of, four hundred churches in Flanders. The most ardent among the gentry demanded the suppression of the religious edicts, and of the Inquisition; the more moderate among them desired the convocation of the States-General. The demands of the aristocracy—both those who were carried away by their passions, and those who were for temporising—were identical with

those of the Reformers. Granvelle had long retired from office. Margaret of Parma, who did not find in herself that strength which her legal functions failed to give, met the demands of the mutinous aristocracy, and the excesses of the Iconoclasts, by expressing her embarrassment, and by promises of moderation, which were soon falsified by the arrival of the King's orders.

The dissatisfied aristocracy were divided into three classes: first there was the party of the ardent revolutionists, such as Brederode, who advised and promoted an immediate rising in arms; Brederode, however, died early. Next was the party of the prudent and far-seeing revolutionists, represented by William the Silent, who possessed the strongest mind, the most solid judgment, and who was the most dangerous personage of that epoch. Finally, there was the party of all those ambitious men who were undecided in their opinions, who thought themselves misunderstood and neglected, who hesitated between the Church and the Reformation, between the King and the Revolution, with an undoubted preference for what existed in times past. This latter party is personified in Count Egmont.

The life and death of Count Egmont are the most signal condemnation of the policy of Philip II. The position occupied by him in the country, his birth, his victories, his alliances, his sympathetic and frank nature, his natural abilities, and his noble aspect, made him a personage at once illustrious

and popular. His vanity and the consciousness of his military services induced him to aspire to the highest positions, such as that of governor-general, or commander-in-chief of the armies, or even to the earldom of Flanders. There was in his inclinations, as in the course of the events in the midst of which he lived, a double tendency, which was fatal to him, and which at the same time clearly explains the controversy of which he has so often been the subject. With great qualities and remarkable aptitude for many things, his heart was simple, his mind credulous, and his will unstable. He is a faithful representative of that numerous and important class of men who, in the southern provinces, began by opposing the government of Philip II, and who afterwards rallied round it,—who did not feel sufficient hatred against the monarch to join frankly in the rebellion, nor yet sufficient satisfaction in the actual state of things, nor sufficient affection for the King's person, to become faithful subjects or courtiers. Egmont was one of those who shrink from what is required for a bold career, and who yet resign themselves with difficulty to be nothing. He had far less resolution than the two Guises: the resources of his mind were far inferior to theirs; but, like them, he was uncertain with whom he should form alliances. We repeat once more, that when such situations occur, and when men like Egmont are produced, it is the fault of those who govern. A doubt attaches to the name of Count

Egmont, because he was the representative of that which was doubtful in itself—of a party which was advancing at a venture, without any fixed object—of a set of men who, destined and resolved to defend the throne with their swords, were yet thrown, by the imprudence of the rulers, out of the line of their true vocation and their own convictions. Egmont was a simple-hearted hero; he was eminently unfitted for the intermediate part he assumed; he possessed neither the coldness, the empire over himself, nor the necessary dissimulation; constantly desiring things essentially opposed to each other—seconding the Reformers in their acts, whilst he disavowed their words and disliked their belief—conversing frankly with men who concealed their opinions—allowing himself to be entertained, flattered, and deceived by those who eventually sent him to the scaffold. His misfortunes were so great, and his death so touching, that it is almost painful to have to discuss his character and his merits. To say, as has sometimes been said, that he was innocent according to the strict letter of the law, is neither to justify nor to ennoble him. He was generous as he was brave; the brilliant acts of his youth seemed to open for him a great military career. Had there been other battles, like that of St. Quentin, for him to win, he would have been a faithful subject; but to force him to live without glory or authority, and with an embarrassed fortune, was to expect from him what was beyond his strength

IV.

THE Duke of Alva spent six years in the Low Countries. His mission there was to establish a perfectly useless and blindly barbarous system. On his arrival, the provinces had nearly returned to their obedience; the preachings had ceased, and the confederation of the nobles was dissolved. The excesses committed by the Iconoclasts, and the expected arrival of a Spanish force under a leader who was feared, had caused a general reaction in the provinces. Egmont had taken the new oath of allegiance; the more turbulent nobles had dispersed, or were in hiding; the northern provinces had not erected the standard of rebellion. After passing through a crisis, the country would have accepted the foreign rule had it been disposed to make some concessions.

After six years of a rule as violent as it was ill-judged—after useless and unexampled rigour, purposeless exactions, and campaigns which, though well conducted against a revolutionary force, were still unsuccessful in their results—the Duke of Alva took his departure, leaving the southern provinces profoundly discontented, and the more important among the northern provinces virtually separated from the monarchy. The Reformation, which had never had more than a doubtful existence in the south, had taken refuge in the northern parts of the

kingdom, and was permanently established in the great mass of the population. These provinces, which soon after were to form a new state, had not yet proclaimed their independence; but they had already attracted the attention and interest of Europe, and they offered to more than one Power the prospect of a useful ally. The north might, therefore, be considered as lost to Spain; while the south, shaken and ruined, had entered a period of confusion and disorder, which lasted many years after the departure of the lieutenant appointed by Philip II, and only ceased when Spain, grown wiser by experience and failure, confided the destinies of the country to more worthy hands, and caused a milder mode of administration to be adopted. The Duke of Alva, whose reputation as a great captain had preceded him, and who had been with Charles V. at Tunis and at Mühlberg, retired, ill and discouraged, after having unnecessarily sent thousands of men to the scaffold or the stake, after having increased the disorder in one-half of the Spanish dominions in the Low Countries, and after having rendered more than probable the eventual loss of the other half.

Such had been the state of the country on his arrival: such was its condition on his departure. These were the general results of his administration to the southern, the northern provinces, and himself.

These years include the period of the first hostilities of the Spanish army against the insurgents of

Holland and Zealand, and against the army levied by the House of Nassau. The part the Prince of Orange had to play was at first military rather than political; his two first campaigns were those of 1568 and 1572. The first was inefficient and unfortunate, the second was successful in the first instance in the invasion of a part of Brabant, but his success was marred by external events, by the massacre of St. Bartholomew, which inflicted a violent blow on the party of the Reformation, and weakened the cause everywhere.

The Duke of Alva did not profit by this circumstance, when Catherine of Medicis had for once laid aside her usually vacillating policy. In dealing such a deathblow at the Huguenots she had to fear promoting the interest of Spain, but she dreaded still more that Charles IX. might become too intimate with the Calvinists, and listen to the advice of Coligny. Nothing, it appears to me, proves more strongly equal want of foresight and acuteness on the part of the Duke of Alva, than his failing to reap any decisive advantage from an event which ought to have profited him so much. This date coincides with the decline of Alva's authority, and the undoubted signs of his discouragement; then it was that Brill was captured by the Gueux, or "Beggars of the Sea," and that the first victories of the patriots in Holland were achieved.

Everything, however, conspired to favour his cause—at least as he understood it. On his arrival

he had found the country pacified: he was at the head of a considerable force, and the party he came to combat had just been crushed in France by a massacre. He had to oppose him nothing but a revolutionary army badly paid, the organization of which encountered a thousand obstacles; but he neither knew how to use the coercive means he had at his disposal, nor the facilities which hazard had just thrown in his way. Several ably conducted campaigns were fought with divers chances, and with gains and losses on both sides; but at the end of a certain time it was invariably found that the North had the best of the contest, and that the South had lost ground. When the Duke of Alva left the country, the insurgents possessed the whole island of Walcheren, and all the province of Holland with the exception of Amsterdam and Haarlem.

The details of his civil government are monotonous in their atrocity. It is estimated that he caused the death of eighteen hundred persons in the first three months, and of eighteen thousand during the course of his stay in the country. If the energy of the people was broken for the moment, his own was still more shattered. The emigration was enormous: first of all, to England and to Germany; later to Holland, when the revolution was firmly established there. The middle classes who acquired wealth by their trades, and raised themselves by their scientific attainments,

carried away with them elsewhere their active habits and their intelligence. The duties which the Duke of Alva wished to establish on the sales of personal and real property will always remain a proof of his incapacity and obstinacy. The impost of one-tenth on all property, which he was never able to establish, contributed as much as any of his most violent acts to destroy his reputation and to paralyse his action.

The first campaigns of the Prince of Orange against Spain were very difficult. Resources and allies alike failed him; for help from England and from France came only later. The sympathy of the German Protestants was very lukewarm, and sterile enough, as most of their princes were Lutherans, and had but little disposition to aid the Calvinism of the Low Countries. The difficulty of raising an army and providing for its wants was as great for the Prince of Orange, as it was for him to sustain a struggle against veterans commanded by such men as the Duke of Alva himself, his son Frederick, Boussu, and Mondragon.

The war which William of Orange waged against Spain lasted sixteen years,—that is to say, from the time he emigrated until his death. To understand the part he played in this war we must consider the weakness of his resources, and the power of his adversaries; the want of organization of the forces which at first were at his disposal; the embarrassment resulting from the very authority and con-

fidence which the intrepid population bestowed on him, and the conviction which existed in the Spanish ranks, that the rebellion would cease the day he was no longer at its head. The energy and devotion of the Dutch patriots seconded him manfully, but the Duke of Alva had his share in the success of the enterprise, inasmuch as the example of what happened in the South made the insurgents comprehend that it was better to fight as free men in the plains of Holland or behind the walls of a city, even with the risk of lacking food and pay, than to be condemned by the Tribunal of Blood, or to languish in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

The northern provinces of the Low Countries, before they were regularly constituted, and as soon as they had given the first proofs of their energy in the struggle, of their resolution, and of the devotion, as ardent as it was austere, which distinguished their whole conduct, were immediately accepted by Europe as a new element which would have to be taken into account by France and England, as well as by Spain. To obtain influence in these provinces became the object of a rivalry sufficient to bring about war between any princes who were more warlike than the House of Valois, Elizabeth, and Philip II. Charles IX. and Henry III. had too much intelligence not to feel that the provinces, detached from Spain, would become a precious ally to France, placed as they were between

France and England, opposite to the English coast, with the Spanish territory behind them. But these two princes, the last representatives of an ancient race, hesitated to take any permanent footing in the Low Countries, for fear of alarming England, and creating a common interest or a motive of alliance between that country and Spain. England, on her side, saw with great repugnance the influence of France spreading in a country from which she was only separated by a few miles of sea; and Spain manifested fear as well as jealousy when there was any question of an understanding between a great power and her revolted subjects. Thus the future United Provinces, although their existence was as yet but foreshadowed, already took a decided place in the system of European alliances. It was difficult for the King of France to give a helping hand to a Protestant state, immediately after the massacre of the Huguenots. Nevertheless, some time after St. Bartholomew, Charles IX. listened to those who said to him: "The Protestants must be spared. Even the Duke of Alva was courteous to Louis of Nassau after the surrender of Mons. Remember that Charles V. with all his enormous power did not succeed in destroying the Reformation." This advice had a certain effect on Charles IX, and Louis of Nassau, that heroic but imprudent soldier, had succeeded more than once, before the night of the 24th August, 1572, in persuading Charles to join Coligny and to drive

the Spaniards out of the Low Countries. He was convinced that a French army would meet only a semblance of resistance in a country governed by the Duke of Alva. We are justified, therefore, in saying that Alva rendered the worst possible service to the cause of Philip II. He caused the Spanish sway to be detested in the provinces, and fixed on the King the reproach of having used excessive and unjustifiable barbarity; he created every sort of difficulty for his successor. The population, when he retired, was stupified for the moment by terror, was dissatisfied with everything, was drained of all its resources, but would soon be engaged in a new contest with the foreign rule, and would be for years to come impossible to govern. The Duke of Alva founded nothing, he cured no evil, brought about no progress, and reconciled no party. The country was more disordered and disaffected when he quitted it than when he first came. Violence like his raises more enemies than it can destroy. His brutality provoked the separation of the northern provinces, and it was not his hand that secured the southern provinces for Spain.

We can already see that the revolution was making its way; it passed through many stages in succession. The insurrection of the southern provinces had preceded that in the northern, and its failure must be attributed to the want of breadth and solidity in its basis; the rebellion ceased of its own accord. The rigour shown by the government

of the Duke of Alva could only be justified by the actual prevalence of a violent popular agitation; and when this agitation had ceased, the government had to find another pretext—that of effectually preventing the recurrence of any revolutionary movement. He did not succeed in altering the course of events, and his acts were out of all proportion with the force or actual disposition of the Protestants or of their confederates, whom it was his mission to crush or to dissolve.

V.

During the period of some ten years which elapsed between the departure of the Duke of Alva and the violent death of the Prince of Orange, the course of events in the Low Countries was variable and complicated. When this period terminated, the northern provinces were in fact almost independent: although this fact had not yet been proclaimed by themselves, and had been still less legally recognised by other powers, nevertheless their existence, as pre-stated, seemed destined to last. The patient, intelligent, and conciliating efforts of the Prince of Orange to wrest all the ancient Burgundian provinces from Spain, unsuccessful as he was, are what strike us most in this interval. He never hoped, indeed, to achieve a

condition of absolute independence for these provinces, but his desire was to see them united under the protectorate of some foreign power—that of France by preference—and on the firm basis of perfect religious toleration. This was, if we can read in a mind so secret as that of William, the aim of his policy, and the extent of his hopes; he was not ambitious for the country, nor perhaps long-sighted, and modest as regarded himself and his hopes. Some of his outward acts would seem to assume nothing more than the separate foundation of the northern republic; but everything indicates that in his secret heart he aspired, for the new government of the provinces, to something more and to something less than that,—to less independence, and to a more general union.

What rendered the condition of things during these years so unsettled was the fact that there existed in the whole country but one sentiment, which all men felt in common, and that one was negative. This was hatred of the Spanish sway, which feeling had been mainly fostered by the Duke of Alva. Apart from that, each party had its strong preferences and dislikes; each party wished for some different object, and endeavoured, without fixed aim or consistency, and with scanty means of action, to work out their individual fancies.

The power wielded by the Prince of Orange was considerable; his popularity and the confidence he inspired in the masses of the people were only what

was due to his merit and to the services he had rendered. But he was the object of personal jealousy among the aristocracy, and of religious suspicion among those of its members who had remained Catholic. On the other hand, his spirit of religious toleration, which resulted more from his political plans than from his unsettled notions on religion, fell short of the exclusiveness of the Calvinists. There were objections, therefore, against him, and reasons for dislike on the part of the Catholic nobility and of the Calvinist democracy. But these two fractions of the population were so uneasy as to the future, so uncertain as to their resources, and so feebly guided, that many in their despair, or in their embarrassment, ranged themselves on his side, particularly as the policy of the Prince of Orange was so conciliating. He repelled no one. He was inclined to think that only the support of France could defend the Low Countries against Spain; but he never disclosed to the country this want of confidence, and whenever the different parties looked abroad for a defender or a representative, were it even as a safeguard against the preponderance which he might himself acquire, he hastened to accept the new idea, or welcome the new comer; he would second him to the utmost of his power, and of his credit: he would take up a position disinterested in appearance, in which he could make himself useful and exercise his prudence either by the side of the new comer, or even

below him, thus proving that his ambition was under admirable restraint.

The different parties tried to choose for themselves foreign chiefs. The aristocracy, disliking the religious ideas of William of Orange, and jealous of his political position, turned their attention towards Austria. The young Archduke Mathias, at their request to the Emperor, came to the Low Countries, and established himself there for some time, with the Prince of Orange as his lieutenant. The Calvinists found a momentary representative in the Palatine John Casimir, who tried to aid the efforts of the democracy; but the part he played in the country was inconsiderable and of no duration. The party of the several States, which was numerous but little united, and composed of men of various shades of opinion, chiefly agreed, as we have before said, in their sentiment of repugnance to the Spanish government. This party was the most conspicuous, and the most active at this epoch: it sometimes negotiated with the Spanish Governor—then it agreed with the Prince of Orange in admitting for some time that the protection of France was the most efficacious they could invoke, and accordingly showed itself favourable to the intervention of the Duke of Anjou, the King's brother.

We cannot render this explanation of the state of affairs clearer, or introduce into it more method. We must admit that the population, divided into different parties, and each desiring to attain incon-

sistent objects, were without proper guidance, or unity of purpose, tending by their joint action to destroy the power of Spain, and nevertheless failed in accomplishing their work. The goal was fixed, but there was not sufficient unity of will to attain it; there was too much hesitation on all sides. The nobles had not enough resolution, the Calvinists had no chief of sufficient influence, and the partisans of France lacked confidence both in themselves and in her. The country had not the strength of temperament nor the passionate ardour necessary to accomplish so great a task. The years of which we now speak belong to that period when the attempts made were considerable but confused, when the efforts were ill-combined, the times feverish, and the struggle laborious though without results. The time came when the men of influence in the south made more formal overtures to France, without success, and when the United Provinces addressed themselves more directly to England, equally without procuring any great aid; but they were destined at last to find that their best support lay in themselves. At that moment the French party had not taken any determined or fixed mode of procedure, and Queen Elizabeth wavered in her foreign policy between the most diverse and undefined projects.

In the midst of this prolonged confusion, the Prince of Orange was perfectly consistent, and firm in his policy of mistrust. He saw that it

would be destruction to form and announce any projects which were definite in their tendencies, and which required prompt execution, while they manifested a high ambition on his part. His desire was to wrest the provinces from Spain, and to form them into a state, in imitation of the ancient Burgundian power, but under the more direct protection of France. The state of affairs did not admit of any more decided action. He had the greatest faith in time, in the results of the work which the country was doing for itself, in the experience gained by former abortive attempts, and in its own obstinacy. The act called the "Pacification of Ghent" was brought about by him. Its object was to unite the representatives of all the provinces in one definite understanding, to establish perfect tolerance in all religious matters, to affirm nothing for or against Spain, whilst they shook off her rule without saying so, and to rally all opinions by the very vagueness of the contract. It was the most faithful and complete expression of his political ideas; for it embodied all that he desired for his fellow-citizens and for himself. It did not last, because, although while men agreed as to the political aim, and as to what they did not want, they yet differed as to their religious principles; and it is difficult for a contract to last which rests on religious dissidence on the one side, and on a negative political basis on the other. The "Union of Brussels," which followed the Pacification of

Ghent, resembled it in spirit, in its conditions, and in its destiny. It had no longer duration; and when later, William made the delegates assembled at Utrecht sign a "Union" destined to found a lasting and powerful republic in the north —when he put forth the idea which was to secure so great a future, he satisfied his own political dreams less than in his earlier work which, most assuredly, was conceived in a generous spirit and founded on the sound principle of conciliation and of universal liberty, but which was necessarily ephemeral.

Philip II. himself seems to have been quite forgotten during those years. He is then much less prominent than in the preceding epochs, under the administrations of Margaret of Parma and of the Duke of Alva. The name of the King figures much more rarely in the historical accounts of those times. Don John of Austria, his natural brother, his representative, the hero of Lepanto, a prince of chivalrous character, handsome, generous, ambitious, affable, amiable, and of fascinating manners —one who had dreamt even of dethroning Elizabeth and marrying Mary Stuart, to reign with her in England—who would have gone to the end of the world in search of fortune—came to the Low Countries to fulfil an ungrateful mission, and to experience there all the bitterness caused by the want of resources and authority, and by neglect. He gained, indeed, a momentary advantage over

the army of the States, but he soon succumbed to the superior force of William of Orange, and to his influence over the mass of the people. He did everything that a loyal and honest nature could do as the representative of such a ruler as Philip, in whose system of government tyranny and negligence were combined in the most dangerous manner. The sojourn of Don John in the Low Countries was but an episode in this great drama.

In the opposite camp, the Duke of Anjou, brother to Henry III, who had been called by the States to defend the liberties of the country, played a more serious part. He found more support; for he came to meet the wishes of a considerable portion of the population, as well as those of the Prince of Orange. Had he been differently gifted; had he with his facility and intelligence possessed more good faith and rectitude, and less of the spirit of intrigue, he would have been able to accomplish great things. If he had but understood his mission, he would not have overstepped its limits. He had the ambition, not to govern the country in the interests of its people, but to obtain it for himself, and administer it for his own benefit as its absolute master. He did not aspire, like Don John, to the hand of Mary Stuart, but he sought that of Elizabeth, who repelled his advances; and after having failed in politics, as he had in the pursuit of his pretended courtship, he returned to die ingloriously in his own country.

It is singular how everything that happened then, instead of restoring order and quiet, augmented the public commotion—how the chief actors, by their unfitness or by their passions, failed in rendering any great service; and how events were fated to combine with the unsettled state of men's minds in producing disorder.

The foundation of the United Provinces, however, was being seriously laid during that time. The southern provinces were almost entirely left to themselves, and the Spanish troops, deprived of their pay, added a military revolt to the political and moral revolt of the middle classes.

The mutinous soldiers of Philip II. inspired terror at Antwerp and Alost, and some time afterwards, the town of Ghent, under the combined influence of the old communal spirit and of Calvinism, attempted a separate rising, and the establishment of a provisional Government. The insurrection of Ghent, which corresponds with the mutiny in the Spanish army, and was remotely the reaction from it, bears that double character, and may be reckoned among the important events of the period. It was attributable to the descendants of the men who rebelled, in 1539, against Charles V, on account of a demand for money; but it was now most strenuously supported by the Calvinist party. Its first burst was marked by great violence, owing to the character of Hembyse, who planned it and led the earlier movements. Historians have narrated this occur-

rence with all the detail that it merits; we can only mark its significance and the place it occupies in the whole circle of events.[1]

It is easy to understand this sharp division in men's minds, the universal and reciprocal distrust arising from the obscurity of the future, and the hesitation of all between so many opposite parties. There was on the one hand the aristocracy, whose influential members were animated at one and the same time by hatred of Spain and of the Reformation, and there was on the other Calvinism, whose absolute and rigid dogmas repelled all tolerant men; there was the anti-Spanish sentiment which prevailed among the mass of the population, and which had been caused by the blind excesses of the Duke of Alva; and there was the old democratic party, the remains and offspring of the passions of a bygone age: there were the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Anjou, the Palatine John Casimir, the Archduke Mathias, and Don John; there were the northern and southern provinces; there was the population that had remained faithful to the ancient faith, and there were the Lutherans, the Calvinists, and the remnants of the violent faction of the Iconoclasts. Among all these conflicting elements, no one was able to obtain a decisive superiority,

[1] *Mémoires sur les Troubles de Gand* (1577–1579) by François de Halewyn (in the *Collection des Mémoires sur l'Histoire de Belgique*), published with an Introduction and Notes by M. Kervyn de Volkaersbeke, pages 12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 34, 35, n., 83, 85, 103, 108, 113, 115.

and no one could guess which would prevail in the end, or where to look for safety.

Even the Prince of Orange, the wisest, the most enlightened, the most temperate, and the strongest of all those who figured on that tumultuous scene, had not calculated or foreseen all the chances. He was born a Lutheran, but had been brought up in the Catholic religion, and only returned to the reformed faith when he found himself deeply engaged with the Dutch Calvinists in the struggle against Spain. He had been a page of Charles V, and when quite a youth had commanded an army. His uncle had perhaps borne greater part than any one in the Imperial election; and he had himself been a general, a negotiator, and a friend of the Emperor. He was the chief of an illustrious race of soldiers, whence sprang successively Louis of Nassau, Maurice, Henry, Frederick, and William III, all famous, and all possessing great elevation of character; some were more fortunate, more brilliant, and perhaps more frank, than their kinsman. We may fairly admit that William III, when placed in as great a position, though in truth one not so difficult, seems to us more decided, more open, and more straightforward than William I.

The mind of William I. was of admirable firmness and consistency, but he was suspicious, and had no very decided convictions on any point. During the most active part of his career, he aimed at an end which he did not achieve,—that

is to say, the constitution of the seventeen provinces in dependence on a great foreign State, if it were necessary; or their total independence, if that were possible. It appears that he would rather have seen the Low Countries as a whole in the possession of a powerful neighbour, than have organized a portion of them as a republic at the price of sacrificing the rest. If this policy was on the one hand unambitious as regarded his own person, on the other it assuredly lacked dignity and foresight. These inclinations of William the Silent are not to be observed on the surface of his actions; they are to be traced in his most secret and intimate thoughts, and to be inferred from many diverse circumstances. The immortal founder of the United Provinces struggled on without the spur of confidence; and, strange to say, he was all his life imbued with the idea that, to shake off the dominion of Spain without the danger of a relapse and once for all, an alliance between the Catholics hostile to Spain and the Reformers was necessary. He wished this, because he was tolerant and slightly sceptical; or rather, perhaps, he was tolerant and sceptical because he desired to see this union. Under Margaret, under the Duke of Alva, under Don John, and during the first years of the rule of Farnese, who will soon appear on the scene; at Antwerp, in his conduct towards his co-religionists, and later still in dealing with the Spanish mutiny; in the face

of the democratic and Calvinist movement at Ghent; at Brussels, in connexion with the States and the Council of State; in France, when treating with Henry III. and with the Duke of Anjou; in England, with Elizabeth and Cecil,—his views never changed; his conduct showed immense courage, marvellous tenacity of purpose, great tolerance, but feeble convictions. In the midst of the general chaos, his figure stands out during the last years of his life in honourable and brilliant relief. He devoted himself to the cause which he believed to be the best, at the expense of his fortune and his repose, and at the constant peril of his life. He alone among his fellow-citizens enjoyed real popularity, which he knew how to control and keep; he was tempted by an ambition which he was wise enough to restrain; in the northern provinces, which were first constituted, he was all-powerful; while he was more influential and more listened to than any one else in the rest of the country. His conduct was always resolute, and his courage inflexible in a prudent direction. At all times he showed his generosity, his disinterestedness, and his hatred of injustice. We can repeat of William the Silent what we said just now of Egmont: that the blindness and violence of the government of Philip II. threw him into opposition, and caused him to embrace the Reformation; and that under a better and more sensible system he would assuredly have been content with the command

of the King's armies against France. The bravery and intelligence of the Prince of Orange would have made him one of the most illustrious soldiers of his age. Taking him as he was, with his superior qualities and with the imperfections which we have been bold enough to attribute to him, his destiny was extraordinary. Few men in history have at once conceived, pursued, and realized so vast a project; no one perhaps has been more essentially himself the author of a great event. No revolution was ever more completely personified in one individual. He guided a national movement, in the creation of which he had taken an active part, and which he brought to a termination. It is necessary to study events closely, to perceive that the immense result he obtained was not exactly what he had dreamt of achieving. The contrast which really exists between the more modest character of his ambition and the nature of his success adds to the originality of his appearance in history, and to the merit of his disinterestedness. The Republic of the United Provinces has been more free, more powerful, and more prosperous than he ever thought it possible to desire or expect.

VI.

At the death of William the Silent, whose part in these events we have attempted to sketch, the revolution may be said to have already passed through three different phases. It first burst out with the united force of the Calvinists and of the discontented aristocracy; but this impulse was not violent enough to overcome the want of cohesion in the different parties engaged in it, nor to make up for the smallness of their number, and for the harm done to their cause by their own excesses. The King sent an army into the Low Countries, but before it arrived the revolution was dying out. The government of the Duke of Alva constituted the second phase, and exhibited the dangerous abuse of brute force more than was wanted for combating the movement which was already abating, and which it had come to restrain, but blind and violent enough to create the germs of disorder and disunion in the southern provinces, while it set up in those of the north a rebellion so unanimous that Spain could not crush it. During the third phase, the northern provinces rebelled, organized themselves, and fought against Spain with forces every day becoming more united, and with increasing success. But during this epoch the southern provinces were in a state of disorder, for

political parties and the different classes were at variance each with the other, and the only common sentiment between them was hatred of Spain. Opinions were divided as to the rule to be established in lieu of that of the King, and their efforts to constitute any government at all wanted proper guidance and unity. There was a conflict of rival ambitions and interests; and society, engaged in a difficult task, was too much agitated and divided to have the force to break at once with Spain, and begin an existence of its own. The Prince of Orange, the most eminent man of that time, laid the foundation of the Batavian Republic in the north, while he treated the various parties and their chiefs in the south in such a manner as to maintain his credit without actually leading them. He was assassinated while engaged in working out this difficult problem. The fourth phase, including the whole government of Alexander Farnese, and extending after him to the death of the King, is marked with a spirit of greater order. The revolution was indeed consolidating itself in the north; but Farnese, the most useful and enlightened man whom Philip II. ever had in his service, worked with success in re-establishing the King's authority in the south. He was not sufficiently listened to by his master, nor was he sufficiently seconded to produce a general amelioration in the position which Spain held in Europe; he did not efface the traces of the mistakes committed before him, but he showed remarkable

capacity, both in his military action, and in his general policy.

These different phases, which succeeded one another, correspond in character to the country and the century in which they were exhibited, and to the current of events whose progress they mark. If we are called upon to assign, in each period, to some one individual the part of principal actor, and to designate such period by a name, we should say that in the first, in spite of his subservience to the will of others, the principal place belongs to Granvelle, in the second to the Duke of Alva, in the third to the Prince of Orange, and to Farnese in the last.

In establishing these divisions in the succession of events, we can at once perceive and point out the peculiarities which distinguish this revolution from those which occurred in later times in neighbouring states; and there are various reasons which account for this difference. The religious element was one of great importance; the party of the Reformation assumed a definite consistency in the north, but it remained in a considerable minority in the southern provinces. These last were indeed discontented with the political system of Spain, but they did not find in this sentiment alone, unaided by the powerful stimulus of the Reformation, an impulse sufficient to set them free. The country was divided into two fractions; freedom was being consolidated in the north; while restoration to the

old state of things was going on in the south. Here, at least, is one great distinction.

The second peculiarity is that the royal power itself was absent, and took no personal part in the struggle. The King acted throughout by his agents, and there was consequently no actual conflict between the dynasty and the insurgent population.

There is yet a third difference to be noted. With the exception of the temporary violence used by the Iconoclasts, the revolutionary party did not rule by terror. It was against the revolution, and in the name of the King, that the government by terror was established. Ill-administered and barbarous, it momentarily repressed the movement, but it did not succeed in re-establishing order. It brought about the definitive separation of the reformed fraction of the country, and occasioned disorders in those provinces which subsequently returned to their old allegiance. At last the division of the two nationalities was settled and consolidated; the restoration of the southern provinces was brought about by means of a government vigorous in its military action, but reasonable and more gentle in its administrative proceedings.

Farnese spent thirteen years in the Low Countries. His first enterprises, carried out during the lifetime of William the Silent, were difficult, and his most important and successful acts date from the years which followed the death of the Prince of Orange: the last years of his public career and of his life

were marked by losses to Spain and reverses to himself.

He played a great part, and rendered greater services to his master than any one else, in this second half of the fifteenth century: the condition of the monarchy which Philip II. left to his son, diminished as it was, would have been far more deplorable had Farnese not existed to command its armies and govern the provinces of the south.

His influence as Governor-General was not only useful in the country itself, but extended abroad, and affected all the European interests of Spain. He taught the southern provinces, in the first instance, to know a Spanish administration which was less severe and less violent than that under which they had lived; he proceeded to deal with the different conflicting interests, and did his best to rally them round him by holding up their experience of disorder and disunion, and urging on them the example of the past, and the uncertainty of the future. Without blaming his predecessors, he impugned their policy by not imitating it, and showed that a government without name, unity, or basis, such as the country had been living under, could not exist. Those whom he found discontented with the state of things which they had themselves mainly contributed to create he drew over to his side, and used against other malcontents who were slower in their return to allegiance, or more difficult to convince. Having

thus, to a certain degree, established internal order, he made war against the Dutch and their party, and recovered by degrees the territory and cities which they had taken in the Catholic provinces; subsequently he went to the assistance of the Spanish party in France, aided it with his army, and, in the name of Philip II, took part in the internal struggles in France. Here, with limited forces, and on unfavourable ground, he showed what a great war between rival powers might have been under his guidance. Lastly, he took an active but ineffectual part in the improvident and badly-conceived expedition of the Armada against England. He displayed great strength of character and remarkable ability in the conduct of an important, complicated, and thankless mission.

His merit was seconded by good fortune. Several events which followed on one another very closely contributed to improve and raise his position. The Prince of Orange was assassinated, leaving a son who was destined to be as famous as himself, but who was then almost a child. The Duke of Anjou had left the Low Countries, and died some weeks after at Château Thierry. These two nearly simultaneous facts caused a great change in the position of Spain. It is impossible to say what might have been the ultimate destiny of Farnese, had he found himself much longer opposed to these two princes, one of whom would have rendered the war with Holland more difficult; while the other

would have prevented, for some time at least, the breaking up of parties in Belgium. These two accidents were fortunate for him ; but what was more fortunate was that the King of France, entirely occupied by the civil war, refused the formal offer made to him by the States of the sovereignty of the provinces. Henry III, after some hesitation, rejected their advances to him : and thus William of Orange and the Duke of Anjou having been removed by death, and the King of France retiring from the scene, the part which Farnese had to play was considerably simplified : it became possible for him for the moment to devote his forces and his attention to the recovery of the territory and the strong places which had ceased to belong to Spain. The war then assumed, under his auspices, a more regular form. The two adversaries endeavoured to fortify their positions along the lines of the rivers, and Farnese, after re-establishing the royal authority in Brabant, undertook the siege of Antwerp, which was one of the great events of the century. He invested the place, and had no need to lay regular siege to it ; for Marnix, when he judged resistance to be useless, surrendered the town, as his enemies say, too soon. He negotiated the capitulation himself at the camp of Farnese, and was captivated, it is said, by his reception, as well as by the distinguished qualities of Farnese's person and mind. By the conquest of Antwerp and of the whole line of the Scheld, the restoration of the southern provinces under Spanish

dominion might be considered as complete. Farnese had accomplished the most essential portion of his task.

Thus, therefore, to the death of the Prince of Orange and of the Duke of Anjou, to the refusal of the offer of the provinces by Henry III,—all fortunate accidents for Spain,—were added military successes, in which, as usual, luck played its necessary and habitual part, but to which successes the firmness and abilities of one man had largely contributed.

These were not the sole proofs of the good fortune of Farnese.

The advantages obtained by Spain in the southern provinces could not fail to awaken uneasiness in those of the north. The hero who had been their guide and defender was dead; his son was too young to inherit his authority immediately. The States were not competent to take the military command, and the United Provinces were uneasy at the prospect of an interregnum. The southern provinces, under the direction of a great captain and statesman, henceforth well governed, and almost restored, presented a more commanding and menacing aspect to their northern adversaries. Men's minds in Holland, during this interregnum, were filled with various political speculations. Everything was examined and discussed: the future of the State, the most desirable form of government, the theory of their sovereignty,—questions most difficult to solve in a

country deprived of its head, menaced by reprisals from its old master, still engaged in all the confusion of a revolution, and where the rivalry between the representative influences and that of the executive power was already making itself felt.

At this point occurs the appeal of the United Provinces to England, the offer of the sovereignty made to Elizabeth, and the mission of Leicester to Holland. The States-General of the North applied to Elizabeth, as those who were supposed to represent the wishes of the whole population had before appealed to Henry III. The Queen showed, in this instance, all the caprices of her temper, and all the hesitation of her mind. She refused the sovereignty, for fear of a war with Spain, while at the same time she promised her protection and aid; because she feared to see France take her place, and accept the protectorate which England would thus have rejected.

Leicester, an elegant and fascinating courtier, but past the prime of life, regretting his youth and full of pretensions, was not the man to fill the important post confided to him. Elizabeth entrusted him with the command of the five thousand infantry and a thousand cavalry which she sent to the help of Holland; but at the same time she forbade him to exercise or accept any authority beyond this command. Elizabeth's sentiments for Leicester, her intentions with regard to Holland, and her conduct in this important affair were complicated by all the

passions in a woman's nature, by jealousy, by ambition, by a desire to please, and, in her case, by avarice. The affection which Elizabeth had for Leicester prompted her to confide this mission to him, while she refused him the means for worthily carrying it out. She gave him English soldiers to command, without furnishing him with money for their support. Her anger was kindled at the idea that her delegate might accept other dignities from the hands of the Dutch, or exercise an authority which did not emanate from her, and for which he was not indebted to his mistress; she would not on any account permit him to have foreign courtiers about him, or allow him to occupy an independent position. The Queen was as saving of her money and as irresolute in her acts as the woman was jealous of her lover, and alarmed lest he should escape from her thraldom. She was with regard to Leicester and to Holland exactly what she always was; she was influenced by the most opposite sentiments; she feared, at the same time, to make Spain her adversary in Europe, and France her rival in the influence she hoped to obtain in the Low Countries; she was an enemy, as an Anglican, to Catholic Spain, yet she was full of aversion for the Dutch Calvinists. This Queen was clever, artful, and deliberate in affairs, while she was fickle and puerile in all that touched her person, her preferences, or her habits. At times governing with vigour and good sense; at others allowing herself

to be carried away by the most unjustifiable suggestions of feminine coquetry; flattered by the demand in marriage from an inferior personage, or by the admiration of a stranger; more striking than really beautiful, and less pleasing than singular; whimsical in her tastes and her dress, wearing even in her old age affected and singular dresses, which were scarcely grave enough, or, one may say, scarcely decent, for her rank, and, above all, for her age.

The expedition to the Low Countries, under Leicester, failed because he was deficient in capacity and steadiness of conduct.[1] He at once attached himself, in spite of the Queen, to the Calvinists and Democrats; by this he offended the States and the tolerant party. It may be that he contributed greatly to form the long-enduring and profound antagonism of those two parties which was so marked in the succeeding ages, and whose division occupies so large a place in the history of the United Provinces. It was the party of the States, represented by the celebrated Barneveldt, who had demanded help of Elizabeth; and it was with that very party that the representative of the Queen was in constant feud. The intervention of England would have been far more efficacious in Holland before the fall of Antwerp; but it was only undertaken subsequent to that event. The mission of Leicester did not succeed: after a short

[1] S. Stijl, *Opkomst en bloei der Nederlanden.*

period of success, he met with reverses, and the campaign of 1586 was favourable to the Spaniards. The division between the English representative and the States grew wider; and Leicester's conduct became more and more displeasing to the Queen. Even before he left the country, Maurice, in spite of his youth, was invested by his fellow-citizens with the command of the troops, and named Stadtholder of several provinces. When Leicester did return to England, it was after various misfortunes—after having been abandoned and betrayed by the party he had adopted, and without leaving a single friend on the Continent.

The check he sustained in Holland was a fresh advantage to the Spanish Government, and completed the series of its successes.

VII.

FARNESE, then, had been thus far favoured by fortune. The aspect of affairs had undergone a great change since his arrival in the Low Countries. The country indeed was not pacified, and the war was not at an end: the position of the United Provinces, though weakened by the death of William and the bad administration of Leicester, was still formidable. But Spanish authority was re-established in the southern provinces, and the

revolution of the Low Countries, though it was not actually and formally terminated till long afterwards, had arrived at a fixed point; that is to say, the northern provinces had for ever shaken off the yoke, and in those of the south henceforth the allegiance to Spain had been restored. The north and south of the Low Countries were in future to form two distinct states, the one independent, the other belonging to a great Power. The two populations, differing in faith, would become tired of war, and would cease to carry on hostilities, though they would renew them later; but they were destined to remain entirely separate, and, after so many shocks and trials, their existence would be permanently fixed under two perfectly distinct systems.[1]

At the time when Farnese had succeeded in ameliorating the present and in clearing the future position of Spain in the southern portion of the Low Countries, Philip II. was advancing in years; but age had wrought little change in the man who never had any youth: it had not, on the one hand, bent his feebly-constituted body, nor quenched his eye, which was always lowering; nor made his step, which was always weak and languid, more heavy; nor, on the other, had it changed his regular and sedentary habits; nor bowed his will, which was at the same time slow and absolute; nor worn down his ever active mind. At all times

[1] Ranke, *Fürsten und Völker in Sud Europa.*

there was a strange contrast between his hatred of motion and his passion for work, between his taste for silence and the prolixity of his writings, between the grandeur of his power and the pitiable use which he made of it, between the largeness of his desires and the smallness of their results. In the latter years of his life, those which followed the victories of Farnese, he dreamt of mounting the throne of the Valois, or of placing his daughter there,[1] and of conquering England by destroying her naval power. We all know the success of the Spanish Armada—an enterprise so rashly undertaken,—and we know what obstacles Philip encountered in France, and who was Henry III.'s successor. The man who, without quitting his chair, aspired to universal monarchy, was not even capable of keeping Holland. He wished to maintain religious unity in Europe, and he did not even comprehend that the first step was to exterminate Calvinism in the Low Countries. Philip II. has been greatly praised for that inflexible moral force which caused him to have but one ambition all his life—the desire to be master in great as well as in small things—in his vast possessions as in the interior of his palace. The Venetian ambassadors who resided at his court tried, and to a certain degree succeeded, in raising his reputation; but the diplomatists of the celebrated republic were

[1] Isabel-Clara-Eugenia, daughter of Elizabeth of France, and niece of the three sons of Henry II. of Francey.

instructed to show the greatest friendship towards Spain, and to pay particular attention to everything that could smooth away differences and avoid quarrels. After reading the despatches of Badoaro, of Tiepolo, and of Contarini, we are compelled to ask whether their historical value has not been somewhat exaggerated; and whether the reports of these ambassadors, which are valuable for the history of Charles V, do not bear the impress of a certain partiality in favour of his son. Philip II. has in general been very ill-treated by history, in which he occupies an unenviable place, by the side of Louis XI. and James II. He bears a stronger resemblance to the latter of the two. He cannot certainly be accused of scepticism or of the want of convictions; but what he entirely lacked was the true sense of his mission or of his position in Europe; what has weighed upon his fame is the pretension of conquering Europe without even quitting his study, and of preserving religious unity without fighting for it. As we have already said, his reputation would have been quite different if, without renouncing any of his ideas, he had, like Charles V. in Germany and Richelieu in France, opposed the Reformation face to face, and if he had, sword in hand, sacrificed his repose and risked his life in the service of this cause—if he had not neglected the highest duties of his position, to occupy himself only with the most laborious—if he had not always taken the meanest view of

all the most important questions. War he turned into an exercise of cruelty, and policy into a talent for keeping secrets. Instead of aggrandizing and increasing the inheritance left by his father, he hastened its decline; and everything tends to prove that, had Don Carlos lived to ascend the throne, he would have precipitated this decay of the race of Charles V. even more than Philip III. did. The life and policy of Philip II. were too patent, and his existence too conspicuous, for us to find any difficulty in judging the man by his actions; but the workings of his mind are less evident. The man who sacrificed Granvelle, who beheaded the loyal Egmont and caused Montigny to be strangled in prison, who accredited and encouraged the Duke of Alva, who put a price on the head of the Prince of Orange, who attempted to dispute a crown with Henry IV. and to deprive Elizabeth of hers—who for a time imperilled his sovereignty in Belgium, and entirely lost it in Holland; who under a false party cry long carried on an underhand war in France; and who, when exhausted and unable to continue the struggle with Henry IV, signed the disastrous Treaty of Vervins,—this man has necessarily been judged by his deeds more severely perhaps than he deserves when measured by the standard of his convictions and his conscience.

Philip II. was one of those personages who, without being eminent in themselves, still have considerable historical importance, owing to the

extent of their power, the length of their political career, the events that took place during their life-time, and of which they were the centre; owing also to their influence on the general policy of nations, though that influence was usually unfavourable to their country and to themselves. Notwithstanding the most striking contrasts of character and conduct, there is a slight analogy between Philip II. and Charles the Bold. Both hastened the decline of a great empire, by the inflexibility of their tempers, by their imprudence, by their contempt for all advice, by their infatuation, and by the violence of their proceedings; both changed the relative situation of the powers in Europe to their own detriment. Charles the Bold, as I have before observed, marked the point of transition from the Anglo-French wars to those undertaken by France in Italy and against Spain, which is a strongly drawn line separating two periods of history. The last Duke of Burgundy, by the violence of his schemes and the distrust with which he inspired every one, brought France and England together, and was the main cause of the termination of the English wars, and of the signature of the Treaty of Pecquigny between Louis XI. and Edward IV. France, being thus tranquillized as far as England was concerned, was allowed by him to employ her armies elsewhere. The invasion of Italy by Charles VIII. was the commencement of a new military era, and of the struggle between France

and Spain for the possession of the most important portions of the Italian peninsula. Charles the Bold thus made the subsequent wars of France in Italy possible — wars which in after years helped to build up the great fortunes of Charles V, and to create the preponderance of the Spanish family.

Philip II. produced analogous consequences in Europe. By supporting the League unsuccessfully against the French crown, and by showing the desire, which he could not enforce, to obtain, by the aid of that League, the throne of France for himself or for his daughter, he did his best to make a neighbouring government feel the necessity of having allies; and he caused the foreign policy of France to lean towards an alliance with the Reformers. He thus prepared the way for the career of Henry IV. and of Richelieu, and for the European struggle in which those two great men distinguished themselves. In this struggle, too, Louis XIV. afterwards lost his position only by abandoning the system of alliances adopted by his predecessors, and by trying to maintain himself against the world without any ties either with Catholic or with Protestant powers.

We have already said that Philip II. would have accomplished a great work by continuing the war which his father had carried on against France. He was indeed the antagonist of France, but it was rather by conspiring against her than by fighting

in a fair field; he was an antagonist without openness, and above all without success.

There is no exaggeration in maintaining that this new state of affairs began with Philip II. The direction which he gave to the policy of Spain marks the commencement of the degradation of that country, and of the French supremacy. His descendants would have needed all the qualities wanting in him, and all the good fortune which he lacked, to restore Spain to her eminent position. The end of the sixteenth century saw several events occur which were nearly coincident in time—these were the Peace of Vervins, the death of Philip II, the end of the civil wars in France, the beginning of the decline of the Spanish power, and the consequent preponderance of France. Then it was that the Low Countries assumed a recognised position in spite of the continuance of a local struggle between the northern and the southern provinces. The question of sovereignty was virtually settled, for the northern provinces were separated from the southern, and it was their destiny to remain apart. The latter were given by Philip II. to his daughter Isabella, with a clause of reversion to the crown. Thus the fate of the Low Countries was fixed, and they no longer attracted the special attention of Europe, as the seat of a permanent danger and the object of conflicting interests between the great powers.

To trace all this to the acts of a single man,

and to attribute to him events so important and so lasting in their effects, is no doubt to charge his memory with a great burthen; but when we follow the chain of events, and calculate the responsibility and the duties imposed on Philip II. by his father's example, the situation of France and of Europe at the death of Henry II, and by the power of which he could himself dispose, it is difficult not to admit the clearness of the inference which history must draw.

Peace was made between France and Spain; but not between Spain and the United Provinces. Albert and Isabella in Belgium, and in Holland Maurice of Nassau, and afterwards Frederick Henry, continued the struggle before and after the twelve years' truce, which was a first step towards the definitive Peace of Westphalia. The history of the separation of the United Provinces and of the Belgian provinces is a long one: the feelings of hostility, and the religious antagonism which broke out between the two factions of the country, were strong enough to keep them in arms against each other for nearly a century. After the death of Philip II, however, the aspect of affairs changed, and the war between the Belgian provinces and the United Provinces assumed a purely local character. Philip II. had for the time virtually separated Belgium from Spain, by bestowing the country on his daughter. The military events which took place in the Low Countries had no longer the same

interest, and did not in the same manner threaten to disturb the peace of Europe. With the new dynasty France, as a military power and as a government, had entered into a new career; she became the ally of the United Provinces. The struggle between the Archduke Albert and the Stadtholder Maurice—between the north and south—was prolonged, without much affecting by conquest the territory on either side: it would seem as if the two adversaries had been bent in these contests rather on gratifying their old animosities than on acquiring each other's possessions. The Archduke Albert was by no means wanting in military talent; and Maurice, silent, reserved, sober, modest, and intrepid like his father, had inherited his qualities and talents, without, however, being quite so disinterested. The two important military events of this epoch were the battle of Nieuport, gained by Maurice, and the taking of Ostend by Albert.

Thus, therefore, the general aspect of affairs had been much changed—in Spain by the death of the king; in France by the accession of a new dynasty; in the Low Countries of the north by their alliance with France; in those of the south by their virtual, but temporary, separation from Spain. Moreover, between the southern and northern provinces the war had assumed a character purely local. The century which closed put an end, as we have already said, to one condition of things,

and the century which now commenced introduced a totally different state of affairs.

Henry IV. rather sketched out than realized his ideas; he may be said to have opened the way for the great political system of France in the seventeenth century, rather than have himself put it in force. Death arrested him in the middle of his career. After the battle of Nieuport, and the cession of Ostend to Spain, when some years had been spent in a war sufficiently important to make the reputation of Maurice and of Spinola, but which has left no great mark in history, he entertained, and even favoured, the idea of a cessation of hostilities in the Low Countries. The truce of 1609 was concluded under his auspices, and was signed the year before his death;[1] but, although it was in accordance with his wishes, it is probable that, had he lived, it would not have lasted for the twelve years assigned to it.

The policy of Henry IV, which went under the name of "the great design" (*le grand dessein*), aimed at establishing a balance of power in Europe, based on the condition of weakening Spain. It rested on territorial arrangements, differing in more than one point from those which had hitherto existed; and it took for granted a state of peace which could only be secured by a previous war.

[1] *Négociations du Président Jeannin.* (Letters of Jeannin and of Villeroy, of the 29th May and 27th June, 8th July, 21st and 27th Oct.) Simon Stijl, *Opkomst en bloei*, &c.

The project and the aim of the King of France were to create a distribution of power likely to last, but in his opinion impossible, so long as Spain possessed so many different points on the territory of Europe. It was not sufficient for the security of all that Spain had lost Holland; it was, in the eyes of Henry IV, dangerous that, besides the Indies, she should retain at the same time Belgium, Franche-Comté, and the most important parts of the Italian peninsula. He aimed only at a partial reconstruction of Europe, without any direct personal interest, and with a view to obtain general peace. But a policy which aims at peace by making war—particularly a war with a power so formidable as Spain then was in spite of her bad government, and in spite of the losses she had undergone,—such a policy may certainly be called warlike.[1]

France then had a marked sympathy for the Batavian republic; and in showing this preference for Holland, Henry IV. prejudiced in some degree the rival provinces. History in general has too much exalted the benefits derived from the government of the Archdukes in Belgium. Two facts have contributed to this over-favourable appreciation: first, the semblance of independence which Belgium then enjoyed, Philip II. having nominally made a gift of the kingdom to his daughter;

[1] *Le grand Dessein de Henri IV.* by M. Wolowski; *Histoire de Henri IV.* by M. Poirson; *Henri IV. et sa Politique*, by M. Mercier de Lacombe; *Henri IV. et Elisabeth*, by M. Prévost Paradol; *Économies royales*, by De Thou; *Négociations du Président Jeannin.*

secondly, the comparison made between their government and the preceding one. The Archdukes were certainly animated by good intentions: Albert showed courage and intelligence; Isabella, during her husband's life and after his death, was deficient neither in generosity nor in energy; she was not unworthy of the great family whence sprang other women equally remarkable; and she can be justly ranked with Margaret of Austria and with Mary the sister of Charles V. But the happiness of the provinces under their government has been exaggerated. They did not enjoy peace and commercial prosperity in full security at the time, nor were these benefits guaranteed to them for the future. They were menaced with being reunited to Holland under Henry IV, and with partition under Richelieu; for them the premature death of Henry IV. was no misfortune, since the execution of his political plan would have brought about more speedily a war with France, or their incorporation with the states of Holland. The ultimate aim indeed of the project of Henry IV. was, in fact, to weaken and isolate Spain, by giving, it may be, the Catholic Low Countries to Holland, Franche-Comté to Switzerland, and the Milanese territory to Savoy. By this means he intended himself in the north to lean on the support of Holland, thus increased; in the east on the German provinces; at the Alps on Savoy, and beyond the Pyrenees on the Moors. He meant also to contract

an alliance with England, for which Sully's mission was to prepare the way, and of which the Treaty of Hampton Court was the first-fruit.

Thus, therefore, the policy of that day was very different from that of Philip II. and of the Valois. It was not, however, carried into effect by Henry IV, who was assassinated at the moment when he had prepared the largest armament and most considerable financial resources that had ever been at the disposal of France. His widow leant for a moment towards the Spanish alliance; but the movement given by the hand of Henry IV. was only interrupted for a time, and it was taken up somewhat later by Richelieu, with slight variations. The regency of Mary of Medicis was but a passing interval. The history of France is now no longer that of a paltry government, with a mere policy of intrigue; and that of the Low Countries is no longer confined to the details of a chronic state of revolution. The anti-Spanish policy founded by Henry, and continued by Richelieu, was abandoned during the regency of the Queen, just as the local struggle between Holland and Belgium was interrupted by the Twelve Years' Truce. These two movements, however, recommenced, were prolonged and were only finally arrested when the Treaty of Westphalia, and afterwards the Treaty of the Pyrenees, had confined France and Spain in their own limits—at any rate, until the wars of Louis XIV.

Neither under Albert, nor after him under Isabella, nor even after her death, was the existence of Belgium a tranquil one. The war between the Spanish and the Dutch armies was, after the truce, conducted by two men, who by their abilities were worthily matched against each other—Spinola and Frederick Henry. It was of the same nature as the contest which preceded the truce; that is to say, it was purely local, and until the beginning of the Thirty Years' War it affected only the two belligerents. Great discontent had arisen in the Low Countries during the last years of the reign of Isabella, and a party had been formed against Spain in favour of Holland. Some years later, Belgium was threatened with the partition, suggested by Richelieu, between France and the United Provinces, and the scheme failed only because the latter did not think that the portion offered to them was considerable enough.

All these different circumstances were obstacles to the prosperity and security of Belgium, although the government was more moderate than it had been under the first representatives of Philip II. Posterity, however, retains a grateful remembrance of the Archdukes, for their administration was paternal and intelligent. In visiting the old cities of Belgium, we often find buildings dating from their time. Justus Lipsius died during their reign in the town of Louvain, which he made famous by his teaching. Rubens, whose glory has never been

eclipsed even in the galleries of Italy and of Spain, placed his talents as a diplomatist and his renown as a painter at the service of the Infanta.

The external security of Holland was more complete, and her power and riches increased at a different rate, but the tranquillity of the country was troubled by the existence and the rivalry of the two parties which had already shown themselves during Leicester's mission. The origin and duration of those two parties were to be traced to the peculiar situation of the republic, which always required a supreme chief at the head of its armies, while all its political inclinations carried it towards the system of provincial representation, and towards a government of the country by the States. The party of the States was perpetually thwarted by the necessity of having to submit to a military chief whom his responsibility rendered independent: especially when the power was in the hands of a man of ability. That which generally occurs wherever political divisions arise, happened also in Holland: the representatives of those divisions, when they become passionate partisans, seek after allies. The Dutch parties sought alliances at home among the different religious sects, and in the sphere of foreign politics among the partisans of war or of peace. The States were in general tolerant in religious matters, and the Stadtholder leant towards the Calvinists. The States were inclined to peace, while the Stadtholder, by the very nature of his

power, was more favourable to war. The States were drawn towards the moderate party of the followers of Arminius; the Stadtholder towards the violent sect of Gomar. During the great truce the hostility between these two factions became furious, and blood was shed; Barneveldt, the celebrated representative of the party of the States, lost his head on the scaffold. His death left a hideous blot in the history of this epoch, and tarnishes the memory of the conqueror of Nieuport.

VIII.

If we cast a glance on the whole of the long period during which the two portions of the Low Countries worked out their separation, and acquired two distinct existences, we perceive that the events of this revolution were alternately, in the modern history of Europe, an element either accessory or principal, according to the changes which occurred in the general condition of affairs. When the great kingdoms were in the hands of feeble or incapable rulers, they were occupied and disquieted by what was passing in the Low Countries; while, on the other hand, the Low Countries were drawn into the vortex of their politics, when those governments were strong enough to force such a movement on them. The revolution had a considerable influence

on the destiny of Philip II, and it offered a strong temptation to the enervated and apathetic government then existing in France, though it did not finally succeed in seducing the French court, or rousing its ambition. Spain did not know how to quell the rebellion, nor France how to take advantage of it. Neither France by a process of absorption and assimilation, nor Spain by force, was capable of getting rid of the disturbing element. Thus the Low Countries, hardly yet constituted in the north, and disorganized in the south, played an important part in Europe during that period; they occupied the attention of all, and disquieted France, Spain, and England.

After the deaths of Henry III. and Philip II, the condition of things was somewhat modified, for the Dutch republic was substantially established, and France was governed by a great man. Belgium and Holland no longer occupied anybody's attention but their own; Spain no longer menaced any one; the revolution in the Low Countries, which the prolongation of the local war prevented from coming to an end, was only of secondary importance in European affairs; and, later still, the part which Holland or the Spanish provinces took in the Thirty Years' War had no influence on its continuation and its results beyond that which states of inferior power would naturally exercise in a general crisis. Thus the importance of the revolution of the Low Countries in Europe, the attention

which it attracted, the uneasiness which it caused, were augmented or lessened according as the policy of other countries was enlightened or unreasoning, or as their governments were vigorously or carelessly administered.

The United Provinces constituted a power which differed from the other powers of Europe, as the habits of the people differed from those of their neighbours. The moral and material solidity of the State partook of the solidity of mind of its founders. The country itself, as a whole, had qualities in common with the heroes to whom it gave birth, and with every one of its citizens. William I. and William III, the two greatest men of a nation that has produced others, possessed in the highest degree all the qualities of the Batavian character; the modest heroism, the wise and legitimate pride, the talent for public affairs, and the love of liberty. The Dutch heroes were grave, almost sad; the source of their happiness was to be found in services rendered to their country, in the satisfaction of patriotic sentiment, perhaps also in gratifying their hatred, but not in the showy triumphs of material renown. The Dutchman of the olden time, like his countryman of the present day, was patient, simple, and sensible. He possesses the genius for public affairs, for commerce, and for the sea; he understands the necessities entailed on him by his geographical position, and he has the interests of his fatherland at heart. He esteems riches, not as the means of

satisfying the frivolous tastes of luxury, but as a guarantee of his independence and of his dignity; he makes no show of his wealth, but he is not sorry that it should be an understood fact. Economical and steady in the general habits of life, he is capable of sacrifices, whenever he may be moved to make them by generosity or by foresight. The most commercial nation in the world has been convinced that to acquire that reputation it is necessary to unite, in proper proportions, the spirit of adventure with that of a prudent reserve. The country which produces least by its agriculture or by its manual labour, founded in 1602 the East India Company; and it has shown infinite intelligence and activity in the transport and in the exchange of the productions of other lands. It has respected order, probity, and candour; it has not envied what others possessed, and it has neither imitated nor even admired others. Situated at the extremity of the continent, and with an exceptional climate, Holland requires nothing from the rest of Europe, and its life in history has been glorious in itself, and apart from all the rest of Europe. In many things Holland has made more rapid and more certain progress than other nations, and for a long time it remained contented with that. It knew neither the feudal middle ages of the centre of Europe, nor the times of chivalry, nor the troubadours. The country has gone through its troubles, it has been able to renew the form of its government, and it has stood the passing reaction

of events happening elsewhere, without changing its habits of life, its national spirit, its ideas of independence, or its religious or political aspirations.

It is worth inquiring whether it would have been possible for Philip II. and his successors to have continued the policy of Charles V, so as to make the second half of the sixteenth century resemble the first, by preserving to Spain into the next century her preponderance and her greatness; and preventing France from turning the scale in her own favour. In a word, was the decline of Spain entirely to be attributed to the faults of the men who governed her?

History is divided into vast periods, every one of which prepares beforehand and brings about some important change in the state of society, or in the territorial condition of the different powers. Each period thus raises the question whether those changes are to be attributed to the genius or incapacity of those men who held in their hands the political fate of nations. No one blames the successors of Philip II. so much as they do him for having caused the decay of their country. Now is it not unjust to throw the whole weight of these heavy accusations on Philip alone, and not to divide the blame between him and his descendants? Is it fair to impute to a man such grave mistakes, and not, while passing judgment on his conduct, to take into account the fatality which attaches itself to the destiny of his race, while we invoke that very destiny in favour

of his impotent successors? Philip II. has had defenders, and the extenuation of his faults has been earnestly pleaded. The Emperor, they say, left him a thankless part to play. The triumphal car, guided by Charles V, was already, at his decease, hurrying down a dangerous and rapid descent; and it would have needed a powerful genius to stay its course. The Emperor was exhausted by suffering, and discouraged by a succession of reverses, when he dictated to his descendants the rules by which they were to govern their conduct. If he had no confidence in the intelligence or in the valour of his son, he had ceased also to have any in the constancy of his own good fortune. His directions were vague enough for Philip II. to flatter himself that he had not in any way disobeyed them. The government of a state, especially at such times, is so complicated a matter, that it was not sufficient, in giving advice, to lay down in curt sentences a few principles. It is as important to indicate the mode of applying these principles, as it is to lay down rules; and it is essential to explain to a future monarch that the government of his own character is as difficult to administer as that of his kingdom. It would therefore be possible, if we felt a momentary indulgence for Philip II, to argue that his power had already been weakened by the later events of his father's reign; that Charles had left him great difficulties to overcome, and that he only gave him incomplete instructions; that the fate of Spain under

the more remote successors to the Emperor, sufficiently shows how difficult it was to keep the country at the elevated point at which he had placed it, and to efface the recollection of the misfortunes of the last years of his rule. If we admit all these considerations, and make the most of these excuses, we may perhaps succeed in extenuating the mistakes committed by Philip II, and thus throw a small amount of the blame on his father; and we may too attribute the continued duration of the misfortunes of Spain to those who came after him. But posterity has not been disposed to make these allowances: it persists in saying that Charles V. was great, that the descendants of Philip II. were feeble and incapable, and that Philip himself was to blame. Men are in fact more disposed to shed additional lustre on the name of Charles V, and to absolve his grandchildren, than in any respect to diminish the responsibility of Philip II. History, however impartial it is supposed and bound to be, is inspired, we must confess, with passionate admiration for certain men, and passionate hatred of others. When eminent characters or persons of great influence are brought into contact in those great moral struggles in which the intelligence, the feelings, and the religious faith of men are ardently engaged, succeeding generations, while they sit in judgment on the contest, are sure to be more or less biassed by the love or the hatred which was felt by contemporaries.

MERELY to read all that has been published on the revolution of the Low Countries would require many years of study. In our own day, four great works relating to that event have been undertaken; of which three only have been completed,—the collection of Granvelle's State Papers; the correspondence of William the Silent, collected by M. Gachard; and the archives of the family of Orange-Nassau, edited, and accompanied by commentaries, summaries, and notes, by M. Groen Van Prinsterer.

We have already alluded to the papers of Granvelle, which long remained unpublished at Besançon. His career as a minister of Philip II. in the Low Countries was a short one; his influence scarcely affected the policy of the King, and was by no means what it might have been. The correspondence of William the Silent has a totally different importance, depending, however, on the writer himself. M. Gachard has exhibited in this work an amount of knowledge, and a scrupulous impartiality, such as we might have expected from him.

The archives of the House of Orange are a vast monument, erected with patience by a writer of great learning and singular depth of thought. An introduction, placed at the beginning of each volume, contains a concise summary of its contents, and in this the author gives able and conscientious opinions, as a politician, as well as an historian, on the events

to which the volume refers, and on the documents which it contains. Some of the questions which agitated Holland in the sixteenth century, still occasionally divide men's minds at the present time; and M. Groen Van Prinsterer is too considerable a man in his own country not to have, on the affairs of that time as on those of the present day, strongly marked opinions of his own. The work, therefore, vast as it is, offers to us ancient documents of great value with the commentary of a learned contemporary of our own time.

The correspondence of Philip II, brought from Spain by M. Gachard, although incomplete, contributes to our knowledge of Philip II. by exhibiting testimony which cannot be refused—that of Philip himself. When we possess several hundred unpublished letters, written by a person whose life was so secret, we ought to know about him nearly all that is possible to be known; and it is very difficult afterwards to set up or justify a view of his character differing from that which results with such force from these numerous documents. M. Gachard, in his researches in Spain, Belgium, Germany, and France, was particularly anxious to illustrate the history of the sixteenth century. Accordingly in several important works, besides the correspondence of Philip II. and of the Prince of Orange, he has published documents of great value, and has invariably affixed to them an introduction, marked by all his knowledge and sound sense. All persons

occupied with this portion of modern history must do justice to the utility of his labours. His account of Don Carlos throws as much light as is possible on an event which will always remain shrouded in mystery. Whether Philip II, in inflicting perpetual imprisonment on his son, was driven to so unnatural an act by the fear of his son's escape to a foreign country (in imitation of the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI.), or of a conspiracy against his own person, or of a plot against the State, will always remain somewhat doubtful. In throwing more light on this event than has yet been done, and in exhausting all sources of information on this subject, M. Gachard had no desire to give his explanation as the only sure one; and this is an additional merit which we are bound to recognise in him.

Mr. Motley's "History of the United Netherlands" has been as much read on the Continent as in England or America; and it is a work sure to become popular. The mission of Leicester to Holland is therein told with a great power of narrative and observation; while the interest exhibited is as lively as might be felt by an Englishman of the court of Elizabeth.

M. Théodore Juste has published the three first volumes of a history of the revolution of the Low Countries, as well as special works on Egmont and on Philip de Marnix. All the works of M. Juste bear the stamp of truth, of impartiality, and of

patient and solid erudition. His style is simple, lucid, and methodical.

We are indebted to M. Kervyn de Volkaersbeke for two volumes of documents concerning the events in Ghent, during the dictatorship of Hembyse. They are preceded by an interesting introduction.

Many documents, doubtless, are still to be found in the public archives which relate personally to Don John of Austria. Any writer who, with the aid of such unpublished materials, should undertake to describe Don John's mission to the Netherlands, would do good service by making us acquainted, from undoubted sources, with a personage who, from the romantic charm attaching to his character, has so often been presented to us in a poetical or dramatic form. Fiction has had more to do with John of Austria than History. It would be but just to give to the latter her due, and to restore Don John to his true position. His portrait, if it were well drawn, would still remain very attractive without the adventitious aid of fiction.[1]

There are few epochs on which so much has been written as on the revolution of the Low Countries. The memoirs of the time are as numerous as the modern accounts. Thoroughly to understand the various opinions expressed on this important episode in history, now requires on the part of any one very

[1] The author will doubtless by this time have learnt that we may expect from the accomplished pen of Sir William Stirling Maxwell a work on this subject.—TRANSLATOR.

considerable study. The old writers are the more simple and genuine: they take one side or the other —either that of the Spaniards or the Dutch: and they express very decided views on the subject. The modern narratives and opinions are, on the other hand, more impartial. If the passions that raged in the sixteenth century are not yet quite extinct, their object, nevertheless, is changed. The conflict between the doctrines which divide mankind is not less ardent now than it was on the day after the death of Calvin; but for the most part it bears on other points. Men are less distinctly divided between the Catholic Church and the Reformation.

IV.

CARDINAL RICHELIEU—THE FIRST ENGLISH REVOLUTION.

I.

An interval of fifty years separates the violent death of Henry IV. from the real assumption of power by Louis XIV.; and this period corresponds nearly with the first half of the seventeenth century. It was full of events sufficiently important to have thrown Germany into the greatest disorder, and to have produced vast changes in France and England, more indeed than in Spain, where the royal power continued to decline.

In France, this period includes the regency of Queen Mary of Medicis, the government of the Marshal d'Ancre, the momentary return to the Spanish alliance after the death of Henry IV, the minority of Louis XIII, the ministry of Cardinal Richelieu, that of Cardinal Mazarin, and the wars of the Fronde.

In Germany, it was occupied by the Thirty Years' War, and by the events immediately preceding and following it.

In England, this period was filled up by the reigns of James I. and of Charles I, by the revolution which overthrew the government of the latter, by the republic, and by the protectorate, which ended in the restoration of Charles II.

Thus in this time England passed through a great revolution, and was subjected to four different governments. Germany became the theatre of a general and prolonged war, carried on as much between the sovereigns who ruled the land as between the different beliefs which divided it. France, after the enlightened and popular government of Henry IV,—after undergoing the regency of Mary of Medicis, and the petty despotism of the Marshal d'Ancre,—was guided, by the bold and strong hand of Richelieu, through the civil war against the Huguenots and the aristocracy, and afterwards, by the genius of Mazarin, so fertile in resources, through the wars of the Fronde. France was placed between the German war and the English revolution; she was implicated in the one, and an alarmed or envious spectator of the other. Was it possible that such a mass of various events should be accomplished without modifying the conditions of society and the general course of ideas in these three countries?

There is, indeed, a great difference—greater than in ordinary times the mere number of years that passed from 1610 to 1660 would account for—between the England of James I. and that of Charles

II.—between the France of Henry IV. and that of Louis XIV. The distance is not so great, we shall see, between the Germany of the period which preceded the Thirty Years' War and that of the period which followed.

The beginning and the end of this space of time, and the limits in which it is inclosed, are marked by events that happened simultaneously, and by the concurrence of various political accidents, at or about the same date. Thus, one year before the assassination of Henry IV, with which the period opens, there had been signed between Spain and the States-General, a truce encouraged by France, which, though provisional in its professed character, gave the United Provinces their definitive independence. This coincidence is remarkable. The truce of 1609 was an act of great importance, inasmuch as it made the struggle of the Dutch against their foreign rulers a purely local one, and permitted Europe to look with less interest and disquietude upon the discussion of a cause which might be considered as already judged. The United Provinces seem to have foreseen that the protection of France would fail them, for a time at least, and they hastened therefore to put their affairs in order. A few years later the question of the succession of Cleves and Juliers was opened, and the Protestant revolt in Bohemia burst out. In these events we see the premonitory signs of the great war in Germany.

Again, at the end of the period, the commence-

ment of which was marked by the occurrences just mentioned, other circumstances of the highest importance present themselves in a mass within the space of less than two years: the Treaty of the Pyrenees was signed between France and Spain; the factions of the Fronde came to an end, and peace was made between the rival parties; Mazarin died; Louis XIV. began to reign himself; and the first English revolution was closed by the restoration of Charles II.

It would appear as if, in certain moments in the history of the world, the most important facts occur together, and present themselves in groups, as if for the purpose of making more definite and clear the marks which distinguish the several divisions in the flow of time, and the several periods in the stream of history.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, as in the sixteenth, three rival forces and interests stood face to face with each other at the same time, in the three countries which now occupy our attention: these were the royal power, the aristocracy, and the party which, to define it by one word, we must call that of liberty.

What in these three countries was the position, both absolute and relative, occupied by each of these three interests, as compared with that which it held in the time of Charles V, and the first religious wars? What, in the second place, was the change which occurred in their nature and in their

relations to each other during the first half of the seventeenth century?

In order to examine these questions in a summary manner, we will select the epoch when in France, Germany, and England, the wars between the Catholics and the Reformers approached their close; when the way was being prepared for the complete establishment of parliamentary government in England; and when, in France and Germany, the aristocracy, supported by the Reformation, were carrying on, though with a different result in the two countries, a last conflict with the power of the monarchy.

In France, the royal power had been increasing for more than two hundred years, but it aspired, and was destined, to become still greater. Its advance was evident when the rulers of the country were men of ability as well as ambition; and its progress diminished during the periods of trouble and of weakness—such as the religious wars and the times of the League; indeed, from the death of Francis I. to the accession of Henry IV. Royalty gained nothing either in power or consideration under the three predecessors of the latter king.

From that time, however, in the hands of a great monarch, who was a man of courage, judgment, and ability, well versed in the knowledge of European affairs, both the national glory and the royal power of France began sensibly to increase. In the interval which elapsed between the death of Henry IV. and the ministry of Cardinal Richelieu—under the regency

of Mary of Medicis, and during the minority of Louis XIII.—the government of France relapsed into the ways of the preceding dynasty; its authority was little respected at home, and it was timid abroad; it did not dare to renounce the alliance with Spain, which Henry IV. had broken through; but the system did not last long enough to cause to the monarchical power the loss of what had been gained during the course of the last reign. With Richelieu, royalty entered on its proper career, and regained power and courage; it definitively abandoned the Spanish alliance, crushed the parties hostile to the crown, and acquired, by its energetic action and by its alliances, a remarkable ascendency in Europe. Thus, after having lost its influence under the reigns of the three sons of Catherine of Medicis, the power of the crown in France increased under Henry IV.; but again changing its character, during the minority and the early years of the reign of Louis XIII, it returned to the system which prevailed under the immediate predecessors of Henry IV, and resumed its true and proper course only under Richelieu.

The French aristocracy regretted the loss of its position in old times, and always was eager to grasp again under some form or some pretext a portion of its former independence, but from the time of the first wars of the Reformation its lot was exactly the reverse of that of the crown; that is to say, it struggled more vigorously against the power of the

monarch, when that power was weak, and it experienced increasing losses when royalty was strongly represented. On the whole, the aristocracy lost considerably more than it gained; for the general movement of society was more adverse to it than the fits of momentary weakness on the part of the crown were profitable. The Reformation, the League, all the embarrassments and all the misfortunes of the monarchy during that period, did not prevent the aristocracy from failing in their rivalry with the throne. Henry IV. and Richelieu—particularly the latter—made the aristocracy bend under the weight of their hands. The great nobility preserved their hostile spirit against the royal authority; but the decline of their power no longer permitted them to be, as they had been, before the fourteenth century, independent and often rebellious vassals, nor, as in the fifteenth, pretenders basing their rights on family relations; nor could they be, as in the second half of the sixteenth century, military chiefs, commanding regular armies with greater resolution, and for much longer periods, openly allying themselves with foreign powers, and holding in check, by their popularity and their arms, the enervated representatives of a royal race that was gradually becoming extinct. The struggle of the great nobility against Richelieu, and the tumults of the Fronde, no longer bore this character.[1] The ambition of the aristocracy had

[1] Turenne and Condé, after having fought among the rebels, again took service under the royal standards.

become of a lower kind: it still dreamt that it might get rid of the Cardinal, in the same way as the Marshal d'Ancre had been disposed of; but the nobles, with all their vindictive spirit, showed regret for the past, rather than hope for the future. The resources at their disposal were smaller, and the means which they employed were more petty in their character.

The position of the third estate, or popular party, —it little matters by what name we call all those who did not belong to the nobility, but who aspired to attain some sort of liberty,—had undergone some changes; but these changes were less marked. The power of the crown had increased, while that of the aristocracy had waned; and the third element, though it had made some endeavours to achieve liberty and independence—for instance, at the States-General of Paris, in 1614—had obtained nothing. The popular party had held no direct or steady course at the close of the fifteenth century: it was from them that the soldiers of the League, and the soldiers of the Reformers, as well as the representatives of the third estate in the Parliament, were drawn. It joined the party of the nobles in the League, as well as in the religious war; and having nothing to lose, it did not experience the same severe blows as the aristocracy. While the nobles were turning their eyes towards the past, the third estate directed its views towards the future. Its political influence remained nearly the same as

before the Reformation, and before the League, and it was destined to be stationary for a much longer period. Henry IV. gave the Edict of Nantes to the Huguenots. It lasted for nearly a hundred years; but the attempts and efforts of the third estate remained fruitless for more than a hundred and fifty years after that useless expression of its desires. It was not that the third estate in the seventeenth century in France failed to acquire intelligence, administrative importance, and wealth. Industry, science, and the possession of judicial functions; all these elements of social importance had increased in its hands, and improved its position in the country. But where it made no progress, was in its attempts at political emancipation; it had acquired no share of useful and effective influence in the assemblies of the estates, and no real participation in the direction of the general affairs of the country; nor did it possess any municipal independence. The sphere of communal action had been narrowed with the liberties of the middle ages, and nothing then remained free but royalty.[1]

Such, shortly stated, are the changes accomplished or attempted in France affecting the position of each of the three social elements of royalty, the nobility, and the people, in the course of the epoch which preceded Cardinal Richelieu, and the time of his ministry.

[1] Aug. Thierry, *Études sur l'Histoire de la Formation et des progrès du Tiers État*, vol. i. chaps. v.-viii.

In Germany, the three interests thus engaged in conflict experienced changes in their position which it is more difficult for the historian to appreciate. Under the three emperors, who reigned between Ferdinand I. and Ferdinand II.—during the divisions existing among the reigning family; through the movements of the Reformation; and the attempts at emancipation on the part of certain portions of the population subjected to the Empire—the monarchy itself did not sustain any very great alteration. The Imperial power indeed was somewhat diminished; and the independence of the sovereign princes was slightly augmented; but the liberty of the people made no progress from Charles V. to Ferdinand II.

It had been the object of Charles V. to make the Protestant princes submit to his authority, and to extirpate heresy, but he did not succeed; and after triumphantly concluding many other enterprises, he failed in this one.[1] The successors of his brother, Ferdinand I, were equally unfortunate. The insurrection in Bohemia, and the divisions in the imperial family, could not but diminish the power of the Emperor himself.

Charles V. at the commencement of his rule was in Germany a more powerful monarch than Ferdinand II. at the close of his reign; and this difference resulted as much from the social condition

[1] Sixty-four years elapsed between the accession of Ferdinand I. and of Ferdinand II. (1555-1619).

of the German States as from the personal preponderance of the sovereign himself. The battle of Prague, and the first victories of Ferdinand II, did not prevent the general result of the Thirty Years' War from being disadvantageous to the Empire. The German princes came out of this war more independent than they went into it, and the imperial power was certainly less absolute. The independence of those princes who were attached as vassals to the crown had made some steps in advance; and the German aristocracy had certainly gained rather than lost ground by the Thirty Years' War. They had resisted Ferdinand II. as they had resisted Charles V. They remained jealous of the sovereign, and were disquieted by the imperial ambition; while they did not embrace the Reformation with unanimity, and preserved their ancient alliances, or, at any rate, their projects of alliance. To maintain, and even improve their position, in the face of the Empire, at a time when royalty was making political conquests in the neighbouring countries, was a great feat. Everything moreover favoured monarchical ambition; and they had to deal with an emperor as courageous and grasping as Ferdinand II. What had really affected the position of the German aristocracy, during the century that had elapsed, was the importance of military events; the accidents and hazards of the struggle; and the character and merit of the chiefs on their own side, as well as of those to whom they were opposed. The Thirty Years' War

was more general in its character and longer in its duration, while it was carried on with more power on both sides, and on a larger scale than the German war of Charles V.

Thus the condition of the people in Germany from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century was far from following the same course as in France. The monarchical unity which was aimed at and desired on behalf of the Empire had not made the same progress as the influence of the crown in France; nay, it was rather the party opposed to German unity which had gained somewhat; while those in favour of it had lost ground. The princes in fact preserved, and in a certain sense increased, their independence, in the two great struggles carried on by them against Charles V. and Ferdinand II. We may ask, What part in the results of these two wars ought to be attributed to the help afforded by the Reformation to those who were in arms against the Emperor? The Reformation must certainly be reckoned among their means of defence; but, nevertheless, the war was not solely a religious one; and it was not even, as much as it may appear to be so, a series of combats between Catholics and Reformers. Neither party were united among themselves in the sixteenth, nor yet in the seventeenth century. There were two parties in Bavaria; Saxony was constantly hesitating; the *Evangelical Union* had no real solidity, and the Catholic League was not formed for the purpose of defending the Emperor. The

part which was played by the spirit of independence, which might still be called in Germany the feudal spirit, was greater than the part which religious feeling played in this matter: the partisans of local independence were more united and more constant than the partisans of Luther.

The principle therefore of monarchical unity, and that of feudal independence, had a different destiny in Germany and in France.

It is not possible to assign, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a special position to that party in Germany which corresponds to the third estate in France. This party was absorbed in the ranks of the Reformation; it fought in the Swedish army, in that of Frederick V. and of the Protestant princes. Those insurrections which had a totally distinct character,—such, for instance, as the riots caused by the followers of Munzer,—had no consequences which in any way connect themselves with the idea of political liberty.[1] What may be called in France the party of the future gained nothing during that time; and in Germany we cannot attribute to it a separate existence nor a fixed design apart from the religious movement in favour of Reform.

In short, the religious war, and the wars carried on by the German princes against the Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, produced

[1] The Reformation was more effectual as an ally to the German princes than it was dangerous, as an adversary, to the French monarchy.

results in Germany diametrically opposed to those which followed the internal struggles of the same epoch in France. Monarchical power gained in France and lost in Germany. The general progress of events was slower in Germany, and in an opposite direction.

The social movement in England before and after the reign of Charles I, from the beginning of the Reformation to the first Restoration, does not resemble in any degree that which took place in France and Germany; the crown, the aristocracy, and the popular party, played each a different part and with a different destiny.

Like the continental sovereigns, and in imitation of them, the English monarchs attempted to render their power independent and absolute. Henry VIII. and Elizabeth wished to exert the same personal ascendency in the government as Francis I, Charles V, and Philip II.; just as Charles I, at a later period, desired to be as absolute as the King of France. Henry VIII. and Elizabeth—the one violent and despotic in character, the other with a mind at once circumspect and vacillating—but both of them passionately fond of power, had the benefit of two sets of circumstances which temporarily favoured, or appeared to favour, their pretensions. One of these was the Reformation, and the other was the long duration of the continental wars. The Reformation in England—that is to say, the establishment of the Anglican Church—by giving religious supremacy

to the King, served as a pretext or a stepping stone for the establishment of his political supremacy. He believed that without confounding the two spheres of action, each might be made to strengthen the other, and that the ecclesiastical hierarchy, of which he was the head, would secure to him the support of a numerous, enlightened, and powerful body of men. The continental wars, the rivalry between France and Spain, and the attempts made by Philip II. against England, were also an advantage to the royal power in England, by affording a subject of disquiet and of distraction to the country, and by giving royalty an excuse for exercising pressure on the Parliament. Henry VIII. and Elizabeth made good use of both these auxiliaries.

When the dynasty changed, the Stuarts showed the same inclinations as the Tudors to imitate the continental governments; but James I, who was vehement in speech but timid in action, did not push the attempt too far. Charles I. tried the experiment more boldly and systematically; but the catastrophe which he brought about, after an obstinate and painful struggle, varied by many hesitations and doubts, rendered the exercise of absolute monarchy in England thenceforth impossible. The country looked upon its ancient institutions as an inalienable possession—as a right that might have been for a moment disputed, but which never had been destroyed. The second revolution ended by a definitive compromise between the crown and the

country, founded on the recognised preponderance of the Commons. Thus the pretensions of Henry VIII. and of Elizabeth, of James I. and of his unfortunate son, were finally set aside, and the crown in England was far from attaining the amount of independent power which some of the continental monarchies had secured.

During this period the fate of the aristocracy in England was also very different from what it was elsewhere. The history of parties from the time of the middle ages was dissimilar to that which prevailed in the rest of Europe; for in England the feudal system had not the same character, nor did the aristocracy play the same part. In the sixteenth century the struggle between the crown and the nobility was gone by; the political institutions of the country were already sufficiently strong to give its proper influence, or at least its legitimate position, to the aristocracy, and to have extinguished the contest between it and the royal power. The English nobility had, therefore, no special and definite part or object assigned to it before or during the revolution. It was broken up into two fractions. The higher nobility, not having the same antecedents, and not feeling the same regrets for the past as were experienced by the French aristocracy, rallied for the most part round the King when, at the approach of the revolution, the Parliamentary opposition became menacing. After having displayed at the court of the Tudors their submission and fidelity, the

English nobility under Charles I. were more alarmed at the violence of the revolutionary party than at the absolute tendencies of the sovereign. The lesser nobility were divided between the royal army and the House of Commons; indeed the House of Commons was chiefly composed of such men. Thus, at the close of the revolution, the aristocracy preserved in the country the authority and influence that was desired for it, and which was willingly assigned to it—not indeed by the violent revolutionists, who disappeared under a regular government, but by those who had advisedly resisted the encroachments of the crown on the liberties of the country, and whose triumph was complete and final after the second revolution.

The result of the position thus assumed by royalty and by the nobility was, that after many efforts after culpable excesses, in the midst of strange events and many wild ideas, the popular party at the end of the seventeenth century obtained in England what it had obtained nowhere on the Continent; it won from the royal power respect for its free institutions, and the unrestrained exercise of the Parliamentary system. It then secured a position which it never again lost, and which it did not consider as an advantage newly acquired, but as the recognition of an ancient right. Thus the social state of England at this epoch, and the change resulting from the attempts of the crown to gain absolute power, and from the events of the revolu-

tion, were of a very special character. The crown did not achieve the absolute independence which it had aimed it; the aristocracy preserved its proper influence; the popular or Parliamentary party enforced the recognition and consolidated for ever that share of the power which the ancient institutions of the country gave them.

This, in general terms, is a brief summary of the internal movements and the changes which were effected in the relations of the social elements engaged in contest with each other in France, Germany, and England, during the second half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. The two half centuries which separate the abdication of Charles V. from the Treaties of Westphalia and of the Pyrenees involved changes quite as considerable in the international relations of the great states. The first revolution in England, if we may be permitted to say it, was almost an insular fact, having no close, continuous, or important bearing on the affairs of the Continent. But between the Houses of France and of Spain, and those of France and of Austria and their allies, much passed both in war and diplomacy; and in the course of a century their relations one to another were modified as much as the internal situation of each was changed.

The war between France and Spain, which succeeded the war between France and England, may be said to have lasted rather more than two centuries; namely, the sixteenth and seventeenth. It

was followed up when the governments of France were vigorous and bold, and it was dropped when they were weak and timid. It was commenced without any lasting success, and without vigour, by the two predecessors of Francis I.; it was prosecuted by Francis I, by Henry IV, by Richelieu, by Louis XIV.; by the sons of Henry II. it was feebly waged against the intrigues of Spain, and against the League as her ally, rather than against the Spanish armies; and having been suspended by Mary of Medicis, it was again continued in a languid manner, for a few years, by Mazarin. The intervals of war and peace therefore depended on the vigour or the weakness of the governments.

In the sixteenth century, Italy was the battle-field of the Houses of France and of Spain; and Germany was the theatre of the war in the seventeenth century. The first struggle lasted until the time when the House of Valois, occupied by internal troubles, and too unwarlike to attempt so great an enterprise, considered that Spain had acquired a regular title to the possession of Milan and Naples. The second war commenced after the Reformation had introduced a new element into the contest. The struggle between Francis I. and Charles V. was chiefly carried on in Italy; that between Richelieu and Ferdinand II. in Germany. In the life of Charles V. the German campaigns can only be regarded as ill-considered operations, and abortive acts of his old age. What therefore distinguishes

the policy of the war in the times of Francis I. and of Richelieu, and marks the difference between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is that the seat of war was changed, and that France no longer attempted to secure Italy. She no longer sought to conquer a large state beyond the boundaries of her own territory; but she desired to attain in Germany a greater preponderance than that possessed by the House of Spain. Again, the alliance of France with the Protestants was established; for Richelieu's object was the same as that of Henry IV, but it was more precise and determined, and, if we may use the expression, his policy was more inexorable and less elastic. He desired to obtain the alliance of the German and Dutch Protestants, the friendship or the neutrality of England, and, moreover, the total destruction of all parties in France itself. His policy had a greater scope than that of Francis I, and it embraced a greater number of objects; the policy of Richelieu would have been the more difficult of the two if he had not enjoyed the great advantage of not having to contend with Charles V. Francis I. desired and had some idea of an alliance with the Protestants, but he never knew how to establish it firmly; he might have derived from it a totally different result than he did obtain, although the Reformation in his time had much less power than it acquired a hundred years later. In speaking of him, we have already said that he could have obtained from Henry VIII, from Venice, from the

independent or republican Italians, and from Turkey, far more aid than he ever asked from those powers. The system pursued by Richelieu, taking into account all the changes which time had effected in the situation of affairs, exhibits a very different force and substance, and a very different power of combination. He knew, what Francis I. never learnt, how to turn to account the ideas of his time, and how to draw out all that was to be gained from Europe, from the Reformation, and from the internal forces of France. Richelieu, together with Francis I, Henry IV, and Louis XIV, represents the great system of French policy. He was more thoughtful than the first; more disposed to prolong the war than the second, and endowed with greater foresight and more self-control than the third. The personal advantages of Francis I. consisted only in his valour, his adventurous character, and his ambition; Henry IV. had over Richelieu the advantage of his attractive and sympathetic nature, and his easy and confident power of judging his position, as well as the military habit of cheerfully accepting the decisions of fortune; Richelieu had over Henry IV. the advantage of an iron will, an admirable precision of mind, and the faculty of concentrating all his attention and all his powers on one single object.

We have thus indicated the principal points in which the international relations of the Houses of France and Spain in the sixteenth century differed from what they were in the seventeenth.

II.

CARDINAL RICHELIEU, on a different system, because his character was different, carried on the policy of Henry IV, which was based on the following principles:—A foreign war with the Empire and Spain, supported by an alliance with the Protestant powers; resistance at home against the aristocracy, and the partisans of peace or alliance with Spain.

The author of this policy was Henry IV. In adopting it, he broke away from the traditions of the three last Valois, the sons of Henry II, and began a broad and comprehensive plan, to which he devoted all his intelligence, patience, and popularity. He was preparing to carry it out with all the firmness of a soldier and the prudence of a great administrator, when death suddenly interrupted his designs.

Richelieu continued the system of Henry IV. with certain modifications. When we compare what is called "the great design" (*Le grand dessein*) with all that was done by the Cardinal, we are led to remark certain differences in the conception and in the execution. It was the intention of Henry IV, as we have elsewhere said, to make a vigorous and short war against the Empire, with the view of closing it by a fresh distribution of territory, which he looked upon as likely to secure a permanent

balance of power. He wished to stifle the internal conspiracies of the nobility, to enforce their submission, and to establish on this double pacification the future of the throne of France.

The general principle of this plan—foreign war against the Empire, and domestic war against the nobility—was adopted by Richelieu. It does not follow from the series of his acts that, like Henry IV, he would have been disposed to sheath the sword as soon as he could secure by peace reasonable advantages and guarantees. The German war was considerable enough to acquire a hold on him and carry him along with it; but it lasted longer than his own life, and was complicated by unforeseen incidents; it is difficult to say at what point Richelieu intended to stop in his struggle with the Empire. We are almost tempted to think that he had a greater love for war than Henry IV, whose calling it was, and who had passed his life in camps and in adventures.

It is possible therefore that the Cardinal enlarged the plan of foreign policy conceived by Henry IV.; and framed for France projects even more warlike. Both his scheme in the interests of royalty, and for the conduct of foreign affairs, rested then on the same basis as that of Henry IV. The difference between his mode of action and that of the King in the struggle with the different parties in France, was owing as much to the man himself, his temper, and his inclinations, as to the circumstances. But

the King's policy was, as a whole and in its detail, larger, more generous, and milder than that of the Cardinal.

This comparison between the two men does not in any way detract from Richelieu's influence and reputation. His courage and his genius were of a very high character, and the traces which he left were most profound. He had the good fortune to come exactly when he was wanted, and to live at the moment when the monarchical principle was in the ascendant—in the times between Henry IV. and Louis XIV.—between Henry IV, who won and did honour to his crown, and Louis XIV, who raised the kingly power to its highest degree of splendour and authority, though he was incapable of maintaining it there. The part Richelieu played went along with the social progress of France at that epoch, and with the logic of history.

The foreign system followed by Richelieu, to commence with that side of his policy, was exceedingly firm in certain of its principles, but conciliating and temporising in some of its means of execution. As soon as he felt himself the master, he wished to form those alliances which Francis I. ought to have contracted in order to resist Charles V. —that is to say, alliances with all those powers which by religion or by policy were the adversaries of the Empire and of Spain ; but while he contracted these ties with the Protestants, he tried to prevent the formation of a Catholic League against himself

in Spain, Italy, and Germany. He menaced or frightened the Stuarts with this League, when he wished to prevent their allying themselves with Spain, and when he encouraged the marriage of the son of James I. with a daughter of France, well knowing that if the English prince married a Spanish princess, the Anglo-French coalition against the Empire and Spain would become exceedingly difficult. He therefore did all in his power to form the Protestant League, and to prevent England from separating herself from it.

The Thirty Years' War, the greatest event of that epoch, was carried on, during Richelieu's administration, in a manner fortunate for France and for himself; it was prolonged for some time after his death: but the Treaty of Westphalia, which eventually succeeded in settling the political and religious condition of Europe, in some measure added still further to the Cardinal's renown. History, which gives him the credit of having conducted, as far as France was concerned, the progress of affairs in the latter period of this war, also attributes to him the merit of having prepared the issue.

Thus the long and bloody quarrel, which kept Germany divided into two parties—that of the Catholic Empire and that of the Protestant princes—had commenced before Richelieu became minister, and continued after his death. It was a constant source of anxiety to him in his policy. The Cardinal's name would not stand so high, if the Thirty

Years' War had been otherwise conducted, and had ended differently; if, instead of the military successes being on the side of the princes and their allies, the adversaries of the Empire, the imperial power had been increased, and its arms had been victorious. By the moral support which Richelieu gave to the German princes, and by the material aid which he furnished; by his advice, by his agents, and by the vigilance with which he watched this great operation, he contributed largely to its results.

The sequence and combination of the military events of the war turned to the profit of France. It is obvious that Ferdinand II. possessed more courage and ambition than prudence, or he would have known how to take advantage of circumstances in his favour, and have made peace after his first victories. He did not succeed in dividing his enemies, in uniting his friends, in separating the Calvinists from the Lutherans, or in obtaining complete command over the latter. He might at least have prevented disunion among the German Catholics. When any monarch (like Francis I. in the presence of the Constable of Bourbon) finds himself face to face with such a man as Wallenstein, the formidable representative of a bygone age—a vassal, whom mental power, courage, and military capacity rendered powerful—it would be in general wiser to show the confidence of a friend rather than the authority of a master. Ferdinand II. did not

understand this; he had not felt tempted to adopt the idea, which Wallenstein had held all his life, of forming a third party in the Empire with Saxony, undecided as it was, and with that fraction of the Catholics who had small zeal for the cause of the Empire. It was out of these elements that Wallenstein wished to frame for himself an independent power, and these elements a prudent government might have gained over to itself, or have neutralized.

The most important incidents in the Thirty Years' War were favourable to the interests of France. The Emperor's want of foresight, and the faults he committed, made it unnecessary for Richelieu openly to succour the Protestants, until the second period of the war. The ambition of Ferdinand II. to rule over the whole of Germany, and even over Sweden, and his error in neglecting to secure the means of making peace, gave Gustavus Adolphus time to come forward and to rally the enemies of the Emperor. When Gustavus Adolphus fell mortally wounded on the battle-field of Lutzen, in the height of his success, at a time when nothing remained for him to conquer but the hereditary States of Austria, and when his power threatened to become greater even than that of France, the death of the Swedish hero in the very midst of his triumphs was another piece of good fortune for Richelieu. The preponderance of the King of Sweden in Germany had already become a subject of jealousy and a danger for France.

Richelieu did not live to see the catastrophe of this long struggle; he saw neither Rocroi, nor Lens, nor Nordlingen. But Gustavus Adolphus, Wallenstein, and Ferdinand II. died before him. The war was drawing to an end, and Turenne, with the last of the Swedish heroes, was enough to insure its success.

The result of the Thirty Years' War, as far as concerned the grandeur and security of France, was, if not attained by Richelieu, at any rate secured by him for the future. Although he did not negotiate or sign the treaty of peace with the Empire, the events accomplished in his time, and under his influence, prepared the way for it. He furnished contingents to Germany, but he was not present on the battle-fields of that country, as on those of Italy, or as he was in the campaigns against the Huguenots in the south of France, and at the siege of Rochelle.

The war itself was the principal foreign event of the time of his government.

It is true, however, that in turning to account the ideas of Henry IV. in what concerned the foreign affairs of the government, and thus reaping the profit of national power and glory, Richelieu set a dangerous example to Louis XIV, who adopted the ambitious part of the Cardinal's policy, and imitated its audacity without providing the same securities; inasmuch as he took from the Cardinal his projects of war, without his system of alliances. Richelieu had to deal with an Emperor who was rash; with

Spain badly governed ; with England, for a moment hostile under the giddy and passionate administration of Buckingham, and afterwards wholly taken up with those movements which were the precursors of a revolution. Meanwhile the grandeur of France abroad grew under his rule. Had Wallenstein with his ambition shown more submission to his sovereign, and had he united less spitefulness with his military courage, he might have succeeded in forming in the Empire a formidable resistance to the allies ; but Fate did not long expose Richelieu to such an evil chance.

Everywhere the fortune of war smiled on him, and when he mounted his charger—as passionately fond of war as Julius II. and as capable of command —it was to beat the Spaniards at the defile of Susa. He had this advantage over Francis I. and Louis XIV, the kings who made conquests—he nowhere met an adversary redoubtable for genius or audacity. The fate of Richelieu might have been very different had he been forced to cope with such a competitor as Charles V. or William III. ; or even to measure his strength with the formidable and obstinate power of Philip II. His capacity was certainly greater than that of Francis I. or of Louis XIV. The resources of France were larger than those she possessed at the beginning of the sixteenth century, or at the time when the great king continued for so long his course of rashness. But, on the other hand, the governments hostile to France in the time of Riche-

lieu had not the same power of coalition, nor were they as well led, as when Charles V. or the Prince of Orange were at the head of affairs.

The supremacy of France was in fact founded by this foreign policy; but a wide distinction may be drawn between the proceedings of Richelieu in foreign affairs and in his home policy.

His mode of action in his contests in France itself was more complicated, and in some ways more varied. He had to defend himself, at the same time, against men of high birth; who were discontented chiefs of the party of the nobility, commanders of the Huguenot army, or governors of provinces, difficult to be kept in order and ambitious of independence; as well as against the Huguenots themselves, who, since the check they had sustained at La Rochelle, kept up a war which was indeed less dangerous, but which still went on. He had also to struggle against court intrigues and divisions in the royal family. Of these three elements of opposition to his authority, he treated the nobility with the most severity. The Huguenots formed bodies of troops which were scattered about the country, occupying and exacting contributions from portions of some provinces, whereas the Cardinal discovered in the midst of the aristocracy men who were plotting against his life. He always showed himself pitiless with regard to the conspirators against his person: Chalais, Marillac, and Montmorency lost their heads on the scaffold.

He used much more care and precaution when dealing with the court, with its divisions and its intrigues. However firm his power might seem, he was persuaded that a rival might supplant him; howsoever great was the King's confidence in him, it might still be withdrawn. The son of Henry IV, the father of Louis XIV.—so different in every way from one or the other—a prince, feeble yet absolute, irascible, sickly, brave in war, slow in mind, insensible to the death of Marshal d'Ancre,[1] giving in a stuttering voice orders which he believed to emanate from himself; the timid and simple adorer of Mademoiselle de la Fayette—such a prince, on account of his very caprices, was not easy to lead. Richelieu had studied the singular character of the King with the greatest care; he was exceedingly circumspect in his proceedings towards him, which were a mixture of precaution, firmness, and respect.[2] Moreover, Louis XIII. might have died, and might not Gaston, the brother of the King, a rebellious and embarrassing subject, who was heir to the throne until the birth of the Dauphin, one day become his master? The policy of the Spanish alliance, which had been abandoned by Henry IV, but resumed by his widow, had been tolerated by Richelieu, at the commencement of his career, when he was particularly anxious to secure the goodwill of the Queen, and it was not

[1] *Lettres et Papiers d'État de Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 536, and following.

[2] Ibid. vol. ii. p. 315–318, and 436–438. Letter of the 23d May, 1629.

quite extinct. The Cardinal saw its representatives and its partisans among those who were bound by a common hatred against the government, among the chiefs of the nobility, in the royal family, and at Court. His foreign alliances kept him engaged in a contest with the friends of Spain abroad; whilst the interest of his authority, and frequently even care for his own life, obliged him to adopt defensive measures against them at home. The Spanish party derived a certain force from the traditions of the Regency, and from the recollections of the League; and the party devoted to the Regency, whose rallying point was Mary of Medicis, made common cause with the rebellious nobility. What prevented the partisans of Spain from having the same power which they possessed in the preceding century, was the fact that the pressure the other way was decided and energetic, and that Philip IV. and the Count of Olivares did not support their friends with the same zeal as Philip II.

When Richelieu then took up and continued the system of Henry IV, he was mainly, like that king, sustained by his native intelligence and force of character, but in a less degree by his popularity; his good fortune, however, was greater. He found ready traced by his predecessor a plan of action for a vigorous and national government devoted to the advance of royal power.

Richelieu waged against the aristocracy a more determined and bloody war than Henry IV. would

have done, whose nature was more supple and less passionate. If Henry IV, who died in the full vigour of his age and constitution, had lived during the time of the Regency, and during the first years of his son's reign, he would, by the mere effect of his character, have excited less hatred than the Cardinal; he would have met with fewer antagonists and embarrassments; he would have been more beloved, and would most probably have been the object of fewer conspiracies.

The career of Richelieu was a difficult one from the commencement to the end, but it was fortunate; it was difficult, on account of the diversity and complication of events; it was fortunate, if we consider the result and its importance for the future of France.

He had the luck to succeed in his enterprises, although he had to steer between the risks of his expeditions abroad and the obstacles which met him at home, between the Queen-mother and the King, between the influences of the Court, the Huguenots, the friends of Spain, and professed politicians. He began by showing more prudence than frankness; and the first of the many talents he exhibited at the outset of his career was his power of concealing the desire to rule. When he was introduced by Mary of Medicis into the councils of Louis XIII, when he resisted the pressing offers of the King, made his own conditions, and excused himself on the plea of bad health and bodily weak-

ness, which prevented him from standing upright, he showed his great cleverness; but no one could have then foreseen that this pale and sickly face would soon acquire as much power in the kingdom as had ever been wielded by any of its monarchs.[1]

France, or rather the royal power in France, came out of his hands greater than it was when he succeeded to power; that is to say, the crown possessed more authority, and the country less liberty; for the aristocracy had lost rather more completely and more definitively the independence which it once enjoyed, while the mass of the people had not yet obtained any of the guarantees which they were one day to possess. Richelieu fought against the Huguenots, as forming an armed party under the military guidance of the nobility; he fought, and endeavoured practically to destroy them, without however depriving them of the rights granted to them by Henry IV. He attacked the men rather than their creed, and this course was in accordance with his instinct. He desired that the King and he himself should become more independent and more absolute; for his ambition was that the power of the crown should have free and unimpaired scope for increase. What he wanted was to destroy heresy in France as a form of political opposition; and his alliance with the Germans sufficiently shows that he cared less for eradicating it from men's souls. He

[1] *Lettres et Papiers d'État.* Letter to the King, 24th July, 1626; Memorandum to the King, vol. ii. p. 77–84.

was impelled by the passion for power rather than by religious fervour; and more possessed with the desire of being master of the State than by that of holding the guidance of men's consciences. The spirit of the politician, and even of the warrior, was stronger in him than that of the churchman; and his ambition than his belief. His contemporaries did not judge him as we do; for their ideas were not ours. Moreover they felt his power too much to measure correctly the extent of his genius; and they were too much oppressed by his despotism to have been touched by the glory of the despot. Hatred interfered with their admiration. Louis XIII, had he possessed the talents of his minister, and himself governed France as Richelieu did, would have excited less animadversion; men would have pardoned a king more readily than his delegate. Such a feeling of respectful goodwill Richelieu never seems to have cultivated. He was patient, and knew how to bide his time; moreover, his career was long enough to permit him to wait, but he restrained himself from calculation, to insure the success of his projects, not from any wish to spare others. In positions so delicate as was his towards the Queen-mother, Richelieu's clear and profound judgment told him that, if he did desert the woman who had begun his fortune, he ought to do so without precipitancy. It was his foresight, not his gratitude, which inspired the outward dignity of his conduct.

He rarely treated affairs hastily: for haste denotes

anxiety, and his theory was that calmness and confidence were infallible signs of real force. His judgment on European and French society was decided and correct, though it was all the more difficult to form and to verify, on account of the troubled and changeable state of affairs. He saw what was to be done at a glance, and he was pitiless in the execution of his will; the originator of a grand and glorious scheme thinks himself justified in breaking or bending those who resist him. The ambition of Mazarin was perhaps more personal than that of his predecessor. In a narrower sphere of action, he thought more than Richelieu of his own particular and immediate interests. Those who are impelled and encouraged by their abilities to believe that they are acting right in determining to change the state of the world in which they live, always allege as an excuse to themselves, when they injure nations, the interest of national glory, which their projects cannot fail to serve, and the general well-being which must ensue for mankind.

The Memoirs of Cardinal Richelieu—written, if not by his own hand, at least, we may believe, on his suggestion—are from their length sometimes monotonous, but they are full of precise facts and of information about all the chief or secondary matters which occupied his government. They do not, like the memoirs of other celebrated men, tell us precisely what was the object of his life, but they allow us to guess it by the whole mass of facts

which they relate. His ideas were elevated rather than generous; he desired the grandeur of France rather than the happiness of his contemporaries. His ambition, although personal, was not mean: he asked for something more than merely to be himself an eminent personage endowed with wealth and power.[1] Like other great French statesmen, he wished to diminish the power of the Empire. He did not exactly desire to cause a radical change in the possessions of Spain in the north of Italy, so as to deprive her of the Milanese; but he wished to secure support in the neighbourhood—at Mantua, in Savoy, or in the Italian dependencies of Switzerland—and thus to counterbalance the Spanish power. He wanted also to acquire the friendship of Holland as a defence against Spain, to encourage those who were dissatisfied with a foreign dominion in the Southern Netherlands. He was anxious to destroy the Reformation in France, less from any religious sentiment, than because a system of old standing, and which dated from the death of Coligny, threw the Huguenots into the ranks of the opponents of the crown. He desired to eradicate the last vestiges of the spirit of rivalry and of disobedience among the nobility, and this is the portion of his policy which he carried out with the most rigour. The life of Richelieu; the reserve which he maintained before he acquired the height of power;

[1] *Lettres et Papiers d'État*, vol. iii. p. 230–232. The refusal of two abbeys. An admirable letter to the King.

his guarded behaviour towards those who had it in their power to injure him without his being able to retaliate; his rigour towards such of his personal enemies as he was able to reach; his care not to create new adversaries; his large views and his minute precautions; his natural severity; his insensibility, which was more evident when he was menaced, ill, or unfortunate; his anxiety the day after he had shed the blood of an adversary; the care he took of his dignity at such times when his conduct might compromise him; the precision which he brought to bear on the execution of an idea which was bold or somewhat immoral,—everything in his career proves the firmness, exactness, and courage of his mind, and the lukewarm character of his feelings. His jealousies were never vulgar or blind; he was not afraid of employing and favouring men of position, reserving to himself the right of crushing them, if they were rebellious or unfaithful. He removed or sacrificed those who might have ruined his credit, or menaced his life; not those who could serve him with distinction and even with glory. What is so remarkable in him is the power and resolution of a great intellect, plunging at once calmly and fearlessly into the vast and complicated future of a bold policy; while he saw with a glance, as comprehensive as it was just, the distance of the goal, and the obstacles on the road. As soon as he had become powerful, he revealed his designs; he negotiated with the United Provinces, and mani-

fested his true sentiments with regard to Spain. What distinguished his genius was, that his audacity was tempered by rule and by reflection; the energy of this enterprising spirit, and the activity of this suffering body, were governed by cool calculation and by reason. The union of qualities which he possessed—his mind at once indomitable and prudent, bold and watchful—justly places him very high in the admiration of the world as one among the men who have exercised most influence on the destinies of a great country.

It is in such terms as these that we may sum up Richelieu's career in connexion with the social movement of his epoch: it was his glory to have appreciated that movement, and to have perceived that the policy which would make the government of France strong in Europe and at home, was not that of the Valois, always combating, without resolution or determination, internal rebellions; still less was it the system pursued under the Regency, which, without vigour at home and without ascendency abroad, timidly returned to the Spanish alliance. His glory consists in having continued the policy of Henry IV, without however completing it, and in having perceived that, even after that monarch, there still remained some advantages to be gained for royalty in France. He undertook this task in its most complicated and the widest form, in opposition to the Emperor, to Spain, and for a moment to England, in spite of the high nobility, the Hugue-

nots, the Parliament, and even of the royal family itself. He did not allow himself to be turned aside by the difficult temper of his master, nor by the Spanish intrigues of the Queen-mother, nor yet by the plots of the Duke of Orleans.

The merit of the policy of Richelieu most assuredly was not its gentleness, but rather its firmness and consistency. During the whole course of his administration his intentions never varied. He kept the same friends and the same enemies abroad; he defeated the Huguenots in the south and in the west;[1] and with an interval of ten years he sent Cinq-Mars and Marillac to the scaffold. Death cut him off, like Henry IV, before he had fulfilled his mission.

The direction of Richelieu's ideas, and the tendency of the epoch, are therefore well defined. Those who were in possession of the governments of Europe were pushed forward by preceding events; by the great wars of the former century; and by opposition on the part of those associated with the Reformation: the moment had now arrived when monarchy as such must advance, or be content to lose ground.

Such was the current of events and the spirit of the century. Richelieu, Ferdinand II, and Charles I. were contemporaries, and the ambition of each was identical. Whether the resistance came from the confederate princes of Germany, from the Parliament

[1] *Lettres et Papiers d'État*, vol. iii. p. 286, *et seq.*

and the Independents of England, or from the Huguenots and the nobility of France, the end to be attained was one and the same.

Richelieu carried out his idea. He vanquished the different factions, and made it possible to have treaties advantageous to France with the two branches of the House of Spain. He seized the moment for making war, when the Emperor had many enemies to deal with, and when Spain was weakened and still occupied with the Dutch Revolution. In order to obtain a mastery over the two parties in France united against him, he took advantage of favourable circumstances; when one, that of the past, had reached a point whence it declined, and when the other—the party of the future —was still far from the time when it was destined to attain any considerable portion of power.

The life of Richelieu, if we look only at the most important acts of his policy and their consequences, particularly if we forget the means which he used, the violences which he committed, as well as the sufferings which he endured, presents, as a whole, an aspect of success at once harmonious and complete. He possessed enormous power, he undertook much that was difficult, and he succeeded in accomplishing his task. He carried out on one hand that which Henry IV. had left unfinished, and on the other that which might pave the way for the great position of Louis XIV.

Like Charles V, he died young, worn out by

disease and by anxieties, but he had an advantage over the Emperor: he left a successor whom he chose himself, to complete and perfect his work.

Louis XIV. was four years old at the death of Richelieu, and five when Louis XIII. died.

There was no transition between the two reigns: the character of events changed as suddenly as that of the personages who occupied the stage.

The Fronde was the conclusion of a struggle. The aristocracy were exhausted, and the war had lost its religious character. The Parliament occupied the place of the Huguenots in the opposition, but the Parliamentary army was weak and irresolute. Moreover, the princes and the magistracy had no feelings in common. The whole aspect of the country was modified; there were no more public executions; Mazarin was not, like Richelieu, the commander-in-chief of an army. In lieu of two parties associated and making war together against the supreme power, the opposition comprised numerous shades of opinion, each bitter, suspicious, and jealous of the other. The Cardinal obtained the victory, less by force than by the division and confusion which prevailed among his enemies, and as a consequence of the general lassitude and the fear of disorder which pervaded all those who were well off, the middle classes, and even the magistracy. The higher nobility still continued to desire the same objects. The Parliament, with its two hundred members and its eight presidents, wished to become

a representative power, and to be something more than the mere semblance of a legislative assembly. It relied on the hatred inspired by a minister who was a foreigner, on the sympathy of the population, and on the army it had formed; but it was divided into small parties, and it was unanimous neither in its sympathies nor in its fears. The most firm among the Parliamentary body were the moderate members. The opinion of the whole of those who had something to lose was in favour of an arrangement with the Government. Mazarin had to contend against the popularity, the name, and the valour of Condé; but Turenne, at the battle of Faubourg St. Antoine, commanded the royal army. Thus the great captains of the age were not then both in the same camp. The Parliament was separated from the princes, and disunion reigned among its members. The middle classes feared the excesses of the people. The Court left Paris and was at Pontoise, at Compiègne, or at St. Germain: but the young King was not unpopular in the capital. When the princes were prisoners at Havre, Mazarin went himself to release them. Everything in this crisis was irregular and incomplete; there was no resolution or union of the different parties, no defined object, no connexion of events.

The successor of Richelieu made his way through all this patiently, and he was never wanting in cleverness and courage. He was right in relying more on the lassitude, the discord, and mutual

suspicion of the parties, than on the employment of force. He applied the best remedy to the evil—delay. He advanced and he retreated, he gained and he lost ground, but he was never discouraged. He had not the same enemies as Richelieu to contend with, and did not make use of the same weapons. The Fronde was wanting in precision of purpose at its close, as it had been during its whole course, and possibly it was not essential. The vigour of the resistance was proportionate with that of the attack. Mazarin, in the midst of his enemies, of his fatigues, and even of his changes, appears always to have regarded the events and the chief actors of the Fronde with a feeling of contempt, as if he were certain of obtaining the mastery without any precipitation, or any show of impatience.

Richelieu's career was thus completed by Mazarin, for he measured his strength with the party of the princes, and gained the ascendency; he combated the attempts of the Parliament; he put down the insurrection, and led the King back to Paris in the plenitude of his power.

He brought to a termination, in a manner still more complete and decisive, the foreign policy of his predecessor with reference to the main point in which that predecessor had failed—the conclusion of a peace. The chief and most important events of the German war turned out favourably for the allies. There was no reason why France should not make peace. The negotiation, however, was

long and laborious, and the material result of the Treaties of Osnabrück and Munster was to the advantage of Sweden, of the Protestant princes, and of France. Mazarin did not interfere in the affairs of England, as Richelieu had done in those of Germany. He did not, like the States-General, protest against the condemnation of Charles I.; and he always treated Cromwell with civility and even with consideration.

The Treaty of the Pyrenees, which was signed eleven years later than that of Westphalia, after a languid continuance of the war with the Peninsula, resulted in securing a considerable increase of territory to France, and was followed by the marriage of Louis XIV. with an Infanta of Spain.

The period commencing with the death of Henry IV, and terminating with the Peace of the Pyrenees, and with the real accession to the throne of Louis XIV, presents a collection of events, regular in its progress, and satisfactory; it logically occupies its place in the course of history, and it is glorious alike to France and to those who guided her policy.

Thus, during the first half of the seventeenth century, the monarchical power had to contend in three countries against the remains of the feudal system, and against the efforts and premature hopes of the popular party. In the first of the three, Germany, the struggle was unsuccessful; for after the Thirty Years' War peace was concluded to the disadvantage of the Emperor. In France, on the

contrary, the royal power became stronger, partly, perhaps, for the very reason that the Empire had lost ground as an absolute and independent power in Germany.

It still remains for me to say a few words touching the grave events which, during the same period, befell the English monarchy.

III.

CHARLES I. wished to govern his kingdom in the same manner as the kings of France and of Spain, and as the Emperor, his contemporaries, either by themselves or through their ministers, governed, or pretended to govern, their possessions. In thus acting, he altogether misunderstood the spirit of the English people, and he took no account of the difference which the events that had taken place in England and abroad had caused between that country and the populations on the Continent; he misunderstood the history of the reigns preceding his own, and the movement of ideas that was going on around him. He maintained, on the day of his accession as on the day of his death, that his people ought not to interfere in public affairs. He hoped, if he could not do without the Parliament, at least to find it docile. He committed a grievous error, when he presumed on continuing the mistakes of

the four last reigns; when he attempted to find in the despotism of Henry VIII, in the passing caprices of Elizabeth, in the vindictive acts of Mary, and the arrogant pedantry of James I, something whereon to support his ideas on the nature of the royal authority. He had not the resource of the continental wars, as in the times of Henry VIII, to distract attention and disquiet the nation, and he lacked the hand of Elizabeth, at once firm and adroit, to guide it. He certainly could not discover an argument or an example for his course in his father's reign. James, who first united the three kingdoms under one sceptre, did not even show the courage and petulant imagination of his mother, nor the proud and violent will of Henry VIII. With talents which were useless, and an inflated style of speech, he had lived without dignity; for the resistance he had offered to the Parliament was founded on no motive or conviction, and when he had to give way at last it was with a bad grace. Charles, therefore, was wrong in looking for a model or a justification for his behaviour among his predecessors in England, or among the continental sovereigns. What he ought to have looked to was the actual condition of the country.

He went beyond even Henry VIII. or Elizabeth in his pretensions to be the absolute head of England, both in a political and religious sense. His position in itself was not dangerous: abroad, he had made peace with Spain and France; at home, the

party adverse to absolute power, which subsequently was developed and later divided into fractions—a subdivision of which overthrew the throne—did not possess any power at the time of his accession. The Republic as such never had any great numerical strength in the kingdom. The events in their very progress created and developed these factions: on ascending the throne, Charles I. had no reason to dread the existence of a Republican party.

The condition of men's minds was such, that it was difficult to dethrone the Stuarts, although they had all misgoverned England, and had professed and openly expressed their contempt for public opinion; and although only one of the family, Charles I, possessed any virtue. This dynasty had in fact rapidly struck deep root in England; it had met with great sympathy, and had it only understood that the royal authority, supported by one fraction of the Established Church, and by the nobles about the Court, was not sufficiently powerful to exercise absolute power, and that some other support was necessary, it might have continued to flourish in the country, which was patient and indulgent towards them. England did not rise until Charles I. and James II. showed that they were obstinate and violent in their arbitrary course.

During, and subsequent to, the reign of Henry VIII, a set of opinions had been developed, which the royal power, leaning for support on the Episcopacy, and on the mere shadow of a Parliament,

did not satisfy. These opinions rested, in politics, on principles which were considered to be national, and sanctioned by ancient right, and in religion they were mixed up with Nonconformist doctrines. Such doctrines had sprung from, and were intimately connected with, the Reformation, but they went beyond the limits of Anglicanism; they were by no means incompatible with the monarchy, however, and indeed they never imagined themselves hostile to it; but they had openly or secretly made their way in the country. The sects whose creeds made up this mass of religious opinions were, or believed themselves when taken separately to be, possessed of fixed ideas; but the various shades of their political opinions were very vague. In spite, however, of the diversity of their origin, and the germs of division existing among them, and which afterwards broke out during the agitation of the times, they were unanimous in demanding the preponderance of a House of Commons by the side of the throne, and liberty of worship by the side of the Episcopacy.

Charles I. never recognised the existence of these convictions among a large part of the English public, nor yet the necessity of coming to a compromise with them. It must be added likewise that the Church party, which ought to have counted for much in the power of the crown, and which should have afforded it considerable support, was not completely united. There existed in the Anglican

Church certain men with strong convictions and unshaken confidence; but there existed also certain complaisant members, who, above all, recognised in the ecclesiastical establishment the merit of being useful to the throne; there were, moreover, certain scrupulous members, who wished the Church to remain in her own proper sphere outside of politics and of the government. These delicate distinctions, existing in one and the same body, escaped the attention of the King more completely perhaps than the marks which characterised those who were further advanced in their views.

Charles I, with pure intentions, with courage, with strong feelings, and much intelligence, qualities which might have been usefully applied to subjects other than politics, took a false view of all the various and most painful positions in which he found himself during the twenty-four years that elapsed between his accession and his death.

He counted on the social movement which was at work in the continental states, and which there strengthened the monarchical power,—on the sympathy of the United Provinces, which he believed were destined, after their definitive separation from Spain, to become an English possession,—on a large royalist party in England, on the Church, and on the sentiment which ought to have induced the Catholics of England and of Ireland to prefer the ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown to any other religious hierarchy outside of the Church of Rome.

All these calculations were false or exaggerated. The Church and the royalist party did indeed support him, but without any lasting success,—the Catholics failed to afford him any efficacious aid,—the United Provinces had no desire, at that time, to belong to England,—and Cardinal Richelieu did Charles I. very ill service in that he misled him by a false analogy, and appeared to show him the way in which attempts to obtain liberty were treated in France, thus implying that the ideas of the English Parliamentary party were a reminiscence of bygone days, or that they menaced the country with anarchy and revolution.

According to the progress of events, when the opposition became more decided, and various positions of affairs succeeded each other, the King became more and more embarrassed, and passed from the hands of one minister into those of another—from Buckingham to Strafford, and from Strafford to Falkland. He convoked Parliaments, to ask from them what they were sure to refuse—to propose taxes, or loans which he afterwards raised on his own authority—to bring the obstinacy of his own royal pretensions face to face with their opposition—and finally to dissolve Parliament. Charles did not always resist; but the alternation between insufficient concessions and useless resistance only made his conduct appear the more wavering and inconstant. After having insisted on their right of voting the taxes, Parliament demanded the command of

the militia. It little availed the King that during the discussion he showed his patience and the resources of his mind—that he changed his minister, replacing Buckingham by Strafford—that as an evidence of his selfishness and weakness he sacrificed the life of the latter—that he placed Falkland at the head of the cabinet—that he arrested the members and then released them. In spite of all, the party of the opposition increased; the moderate party became more violent; ardent chiefs sprang up, and new parties were formed out of the more irritable elements of the old ones. Thus in the end the Parliament became more hostile, and the Government more arbitrary. The opportunities for arresting the movement on some conditions which could be accepted—the same, in fact, which, half a century later, were adopted by the Revolution—were successively lost. The Parliamentary power advanced in a direction adverse to the very existence of the monarchy; so that after several years of irresolution, during which Charles I. might have saved his crown with dignity, and after two years of more bitter strife, at the end of which the majority of the Parliament had not openly broken with the King, the occurrence of certain violent acts caused the civil war to burst out.

The Presbyterian party, which began and contributed to close the first English revolution, exercised great power in the early Parliaments of Charles I, and in the Long Parliament. Its members

were numerous in England and in Scotland, and, like all those who commence revolutions, they held doctrines of a negative character. They desired neither the supremacy of the bishops nor an absolute monarchy; but they bore no hatred towards the crown; they were wanting in organization, and, when the Revolution was completed, the Presbyterian party was in fact revolutionary as against the bishops, and monarchical as against the republican opinion. Whether he liked it or not, Charles could maintain his government only on the condition of making his political existence compatible with the views of the Presbyterians. It would have been politically prudent to concede to them from the very first that which his conscience permitted, and which force compelled him in the end to yield. Later, he sacrificed to the Presbyterians—who were then carried away by a whirlwind of events which they could no longer control—a portion of the prerogatives of the crown and of the authority of the episcopacy. By conceding early in the day to the Presbyterians some of their demands—at the expense not of his religious convictions, but of his political pride—it is possible that Charles might have saved at the same time the more precious and useful rights of his crown, and have saved, if not the privileged existence, at least the independence of the Anglican Church. As it was, he committed the grave mistake into which almost all powers which are attacked, and which stand on the defen-

sive, fall, and are destroyed—that of not knowing how to sow dissension in the ranks of their adversaries.

The memory of Charles I. is not an odious one in history. His character lacked depth; he was trifling and obstinate; under a grave and calm exterior, he was at the same time frivolous and stiff. He liked an easy-going government, such as should give apparent satisfaction without entailing any fatigue, and allow the luxury of a court with all the pleasures of power. His system of government was more honest and austere than that of Buckingham, but it was not more enlightened. The adulation with which his youth had been surrounded had made him unconsciously haughty, over-confident in himself, scornful, and by no means sincere; it had encouraged him in the proud attempt to resist the wishes of his country, whilst he was ignorant both of the difficulties and the perils which beset him. He supported Strafford without scruple or discretion, and he abandoned him at the last moment. He made useless promises to Cromwell, whose ambition he could satisfy only by his own disappearance from the scene. Nevertheless, Charles I. was courageous, moral, patient, and gentle even in his obstinacy. He showed great resignation in his misfortunes, and great calmness before his judges; when the soldiers came to take him, he was quietly finishing his game of chess. His belief in the truth of his principles was such that he was indifferent to the ill-will of

the people. We cannot surmise whether, while remaining so long faithful to his ideas, he foresaw the misfortunes in store for him. He gave way more than once; but he ceded too little, and too late. Sir Philip Warwick says of him, in his Memoirs, that he would have been a great man, had he shown as much activity and courage in avoiding danger as he manifested firmness and resignation when the danger was inevitable. He suffered much in his pride as a king, and in his family and life as a private individual. There are many actions of his which history would rather attribute to the severity of his conscience than to the infatuation of his mind; and the contrast of his character with that of the three other members of the Stuart race who occupied the English throne makes him appear to more advantage, so that we are disposed to show some indulgence to a prince who was punished with the utmost rigour for having misunderstood the temper of his times, and having treated the opinions of men with contempt.

Events made no rapid progress, and the Revolution was accomplished with difficulty. The King had committed many faults; more than once he had missed opportunities for calming men's minds; more than once he had repelled the advances of the moderate party in the Parliament; and in his negotiations he had shown that he was endowed with a capacity for argument greater than his foresight. For example, he had given way on the right of the

bishops to vote in the House of Lords; Strafford had been delivered into the hands of his enemies—a sacrifice which ought to have been made—not after every other—but under no circumstances whatever; the Scotch Covenanters had obtained certain concessions affecting the Anglican liturgy and episcopacy, which had been refused to the English: this had been done under the absurd belief that the crown would find in Scotland, among the enemies of the Church, a support against the enemies of that very same Church in England. When he left London, the King, although he denied any such intention, had already made manifest his determination to meet the opposition in the field. He had brought about the split with the Parliament, after having summoned five Houses of Commons in succession; on one occasion, after a very long interval. The House of Commons had tried its strength in the country, and had done some acts which marked its sovereign character; as, for instance, when it declared that its members could be arrested only with the assent of the House. All these mistakes had been made, and both sides were thus committed; it was the second year of that Long Parliament which, by successive processes of purging itself, and by adopting one violent measure after another, was destined to traverse the whole Revolution. The chief opponents of the monarchy had shown themselves; the House of Commons had become acquainted with Cromwell's coarse face and strong eloquence; Fairfax had

appeared on the scene; many men felt themselves carried away much further than they had at first intended; and many hatreds had been manifested. In spite of all this, even at this advanced epoch of the crisis,—in spite of the increasing ambitions of men, and the provocations that were bandied from one party to the other,—the throne could still have been saved, and the Revolution stayed.

The King seemed not to wish it. He might have turned to his own profit, not only the divisions of the Episcopal party in order to repress the abuses of the Anglican Church, but also the political divisions which were so profound in the Parliament, even after he broke with them. He might have taken advantage of the feeling of the City of London, which was then by no means revolutionary, and of the small amount of confidence which existed in a large fraction of the House of Commons owing to its dread of the Royalist party and of the army; and lastly, of the reaction which was ready to break forth at the time when his departure had aroused and reunited the Royalist party. The first votes in the Commons after his departure sufficiently prove that the moderate minority was still considerable in the House. By accepting Falkland as Minister, and Hampden as the head of the Opposition, he might possibly have saved his crown and his life. But he then thought that civil war would stand him in better stead than a compro-

mise with Parliament, and he made ready for it. This was a considerable mistake, for it was the war which brought about the final catastrophe.

IV.

THE Revolution in England passed through four principal phases: first, the struggle between the King and the Parliament, which we have just discussed; secondly, the Civil War, or the struggle between the Royalist and the Parliamentary armies; thirdly, the Commonwealth; and, in the last place, the military government of the Protector.

The second phase was occupied by the Civil War, and lasted seven years, from the battle of Edgehill to the death of Charles I.; in it the Parliament retained an existence of its own and a nominal preponderance; but it was the army which in fact governed. The violence of the military leaders, and the victories which they won, gave them the real authority. The Parliament sat and negotiated with the King; the Presbyterian majority maintained its position and even strengthened its ranks, after the Parliamentary Royalists, for their part, went to join the King at Oxford; and the Independents—that is to say, the extreme party—subsequently passed over to the head-quarters of the army. During all this time the junction of the Presbyterians with Charles I. was within the range of possibility. It depended

on them and on him to come to some understanding.

The Presbyterians had no greater desire than had the King for the Revolution, and they were right, because it was destined to crush them. The most intelligent leaders of the military party, Cromwell himself among the number, frequently dreaded, during these years of warfare, to see Charles I. and the majority of the Parliament come to an amicable arrangement. This, however, did not take place; and thus by this want of agreement between the Crown and the Parliamentary party, Cromwell was enabled to dismiss the Parliament when it was in his way, and to send Charles to the scaffold, when the most advanced party in the army required it of him.

The Presbyterians were always undecided, and the King was blind. His judgment was more deficient even than that of the Parliamentary party.

The war, on which Charles I. had placed all his hopes, went against him. After having caused the failure of the measures for a compromise with the Parliamentary party, he committed the second fault of not surmising that the Parliamentary army would produce leaders who would be more in accordance with the ideas of the country than the leaders of the Royal army could be. All the great battles, Marston Moor, Newbury, Naseby, were gained by his adversaries. Cromwell, Fairfax, and Lord Manchester (especially the first of the three) were doubt-

less better generals than Prince Rupert or the Duke of Newcastle. The army, over which the majority of the House of Commons had but little control, was not strong at the beginning; but it received from the country contributions which enabled it to take the field, and from Cromwell an organization which made it victorious. "How can you expect," said Cromwell, at the beginning of the war, "that this cavalry, levied from men of the people, should be as good as the King's, raised from the nobility?" He levied fourteen squadrons from among the yeomanry, who formed an excellent, intrepid, and well-disciplined corps, and who shared his fanaticism. He was the head and the soul of the army, as he was the leading spirit of the Revolution.

Of the three great parties who divided the country during the Civil War,—viz. the Royalists, the Presbyterians, and the Independents,—it was the last which eventually mastered the two others, and brought about the fall of the monarchy. The numerical force of violent parties is not the main point to be looked to in the history of great social revolutions.

The Independents gained the day, because they had in Cromwell an able and energetic leader; but left to themselves they would never have attained to such a height of power, nor to such success. The basis of their religion was absolute liberty, the utmost freedom of discussion of all theories, with the absence of all obligatory dogmas, and of all

hierarchies; if there was nothing more novel in its spirit, neither was there anything less definite. There was with them room for every one, and for every sect; a national Church was useless—no one could think he was excluded. Every assemblage of men formed for the purpose of adoring the Deity was a Church. The vagueness of their ideas, tolerant beyond measure in theory, from the total absence of limits, went almost beyond Christianity itself, and it was associated with extreme and arbitrary violence in action. Lilburne, and Milton, and the men who were the best known and the most advanced of the party, would never have ensured its success had they not been backed by Cromwell, who turned their zeal to account for the advancement of his worldly interests, without finding anything to shock him in the novelty and the elasticity of their doctrines.

That which Cromwell dreaded more than once during the course of the war—the union of the Royalists with one of the other two parties—never took effect: Charles I, until the very day of his trial, laboured under the illusion that it was open to him to choose between the two parties; he believed it to be impossible for either the Presbyterians or the Independents to obtain the mastery without his aid. If the King felt himself depressed during the first period of the existence of the Long Parliament, joy and courage took possession of him every time the progress of the Revolution encountered one

of those obstacles which seem to thwart revolutions, but which are overthrown by them without difficulty and without remorse. He thought his victory secure after the first operations and the first successes of Montrose, and the first time that the members of the House of Lords who had remained in London were in open disagreement with the House of Commons. He conceived great hopes when the Earl of Essex, the first general of the Parliamentary army, was distanced in the race by the new leaders of the party, and fell into disgrace. Again he made sure of success when Catholic Ireland rose, and when the political victory gained by the Independents in London caused an anti-revolutionary riot to break out in the City, which he believed would prove decisive. After having long held the conviction that it only depended on him to treat with the Presbyterians—which was true, but under conditions which he never consented to accept—he wished to enter into negotiations with the leaders of the Independents, feeling sure with their aid of dealing with the Presbyterians, who had never been willing to submit.

Such is ever the fate of revolutions. The violent parties, which decide matters, are governed by the energy of several chiefs, or by one man, whereas those in authority and the moderate men remain undecided, shrink from a sacrifice, live on in a state of illusion, forget that time presses, and can neither foresee nor measure their danger nor combine to

meet it. They are irritated by the ambition of the popular leaders, and they fail to see that such ambition is for the moment in harmony with the feeling of the general mass. They think that they are struggling against men whose character and passions they detest, whilst they are in reality contending with dangerous and powerful ideas, which are called forth by the spirit of revolutionary turbulency, and propagated by agitation. At the commencement of the crisis the Independent party did not exist. It was formed out of the most factious portion of the Presbyterian party, and it soon took the lead. To cede something to the Presbyterians —to admit the right of the House to vote taxes and loans—to renounce monopolies—to beware of treating Ireland as an ally, because she was the religious adversary of the Nonconformists—to defend the Church in all that was not a privilege or an abuse—and thus to obtain the support of a portion of the Presbyterians, considerable enough to make a large breach in their party—such was the conduct which the King and the moderate opposition ought to have followed. But the Presbyterians did not lend themselves to this course ; nor was it more in accordance with the wishes of Charles himself. If, as I have already said, both before and during the course of the Civil War, the King felt justified in his resistance and in his hopes every time that an incident, however unimportant, arrested for an instant the onward march of events, the Presby-

terians on their side allowed themselves, during the same period, to be deceived by the same illusions. More than once they believed that London was in greater danger of an attack by the royal army than they were themselves from the soldiers of Cromwell and of Fairfax; they expected the King, after the capture of Leicester, would march on the capital, never supposing that they were on the eve of the battle of Naseby, that great event which was the principal cause of the fall of Montrose. They thought that Cromwell would be intimidated by their numbers in the House, and that the speeches he addressed to his soldiers, and the efforts he promised to make to calm them, were dictated by the danger of his own situation. The day they resolved to take away the command of the army from the Independents, and to entrust it to a Presbyterian Committee, they imagined they had accomplished an important act; and when Cromwell protested for two hours in the House on his knees, with inconceivable vehemence and passion, that he would never encroach upon the privileges of Parliament, the House did not know the moment was so near when Cromwell would order in his soldiers, expel the members, and close their doors. The Presbyterians did not take advantage of the apprehension, which long haunted Cromwell, of seeing them make terms with the King. They were persuaded that there would always be sufficient time to treat, just as Charles I. to the last held all negotiations in abey-

ance, because he continued to believe that both parties had need of him, even when he was the prisoner of one of the two; and that at any moment it would be open to him to treat with whichever he chose.

In the midst of the vacillation of the King and of the Presbyterian party, Cromwell formed his judgment of the posture of affairs without scruples, pity, or conscience indeed, but with imperturbable good sense. He showed no useless or premature impatience. He had confidence in the success of his arms and in the prestige of victory. He did not allow himself, like Essex, to be carried away by the ardour of his troops and by the sentiment of the country. The possibility of an arrangement between the King and a portion of the Parliament, or of the unexpected presence of Charles in London, and the first successes of Montrose, excited his attention indeed, and occasionally caused him disquietude. He watched the feelings of the Continent with regard to the King of England, as he watched the movements of the different parties at home. When the Presbyterians appeared to be recovering their strength, and when, after the expulsion of their officers by the army, the Parliament transferred the command from the Independents to a Presbyterian Committee, Cromwell ordered the advance of the troops towards London, and the seizure of the King's person by a military detachment. When the violent proceedings of the Roundheads, the preponderance

of the Independents, and the general alarm called forth Royalist manifestations in the city and in the country, he ordered Fairfax's regiments to enter London, and thus performed, after the arrest of Charles I, the second dictatorial act, which was a presage of the impending expulsion of the Parliament and of the ultimate fate of royalty. At the time when he resolved to sacrifice the King, it was not that his hatred was more bitter or his anger greater, but he looked on his own position as a dangerous one. Men of note in the country were one after the other falling away from him, and leaving the field open to a class which he had himself at first regarded as unfit to form the army. Royalist insurrections were breaking out in every direction, and armed partisans were spreading all over the land. The western part of the kingdom, where Charles I. had always found most support, was in arms, and needed prompt repression—a task which Cromwell desired to undertake in person. Charles I. had shown a desire to make advances to the Independents, and to attempt with them, on a basis vaguely defined as regards religion, and difficult to discover as regards politics, the pacification of the country. Somewhat later a Scotch corps had advanced into England, and the Scotch had become reactionists; while the revolutionary army was divided, and gave its chief reason to fear that a military party, united with the Presbyterians and the King, might turn against him. Union among

his troops was, in Cromwell's eyes, the first necessity; and it was when a party in his army more violent and more impatient than himself desired the death of the King, that he resolved to bring the matter to a close.

This revolution was accomplished slowly, and not without difficulty. Charles I. and his partisans were full of illusions, and the Presbyterians were irresolute; Cromwell alone—far more than his party, which threatened at every instant to split into factions—far more than his generals—showed himself in his pitiless ambition to be consistent with himself and with the facts of the case; he alone displayed that mixture of good sense and of passion which gained him his bloody triumph. Without him, as the King in this instance rightly supposed, the Independents would have been divided and destroyed. Who would have gained by it? Revolutions generally succeed by violence; it is not therefore given to us to guess or to say what would have happened had the energy of those who were deterred by no scruples fallen to the lot of honest and moderate men of the other party. A sect like the Puritans, for instance, is an embarrassment both to those who make use of them and to their opponents. They were made to hamper, and to sow dissension among, the violent factions with which their zeal connected them. But if Cromwell, who may have been a sectarian by conviction in his youth, borrowed the language of fanatics in his

religious discourses, his policy, subtle and prudent as it had just before been violent, was far removed from the sincere abstraction from the world, the fervent belief and the stoicism, of the Puritans. The gloomy devotion to a cause; the austere pride, inflexible as that of despotism; the resignation to suffering which was required of others, as well as self-inflicted; the pursuit of the triumph of truth, as an object prior and preferable to that of pleasure in this life; the love of poverty, conflict, and fatigue,—all these means of exercising dominion over others may have been at certain moments mere auxiliaries to an ambitious policy, which, in its foresight, turns to its own purposes fanaticism of every kind, and takes the colour of each in succession, rather than irritate its jealousy by opposition.

Cromwell made no mistake as to his enemies or as to any possible alliances, whether they were lasting or temporary; his judgment was profound and true; he neither mistook his own power, nor that of the various parties, nor yet that of the King. In proceeding to the arrest of Charles I, he made known to the whole world what price he attached to the possession of the royal person, and what danger there was in still permitting the King to be free. Nevertheless, the successes achieved by the royal army had been but fleeting, and the King himself had never negotiated with the Parliamentary body but to reject, as a matter of course, all their overtures. Varying circumstances, ill-fortune, danger,

his wandering life, his captivity, and the near approach of death, did not call forth any new qualities in Charles I. If it is difficult to determine the moment when his last illusion was dispelled, we may safely affirm that it came very late. His haughty spirit, his mind vacillating in its hopes and fears, but unyielding in its determination from dignity and pride; his frivolous judgment, sometimes forgetful of truth; the sudden and energetic starts in him of a sense of honour—all this underwent no change from the action of time or the changes of fortune. Young or middle aged, on the throne or before his judges, in Windsor Castle or a wanderer from town to town, defended by the soldiers of Montrose or betrayed by the Scotch Covenanters, the King ever remained the same man, whose character will account for his adventures, and whose imprudence, though it did not deserve them, yet caused his misfortunes; he is always the man, who believed himself saved when, after losing a great battle, he took a small town; who thought little of the warnings of public opinion, and that the cause of the English crown gained much by the success of the French monarch over the various parties. That cause, as understood by Charles I, was indefensible. Had the Established Church, which was not unanimous in its political views, and the Royalists, who were far from comprising the whole gentry of England, been led by a more enlightened chief—even then they would not have had

sufficient power to govern the country and to resist the combined efforts of the political factions opposed to absolute monarchy, or of the religious sects which had separated from the Church.

The experiment made in vain by Charles I. was conclusive as to the fate of the English monarchy. Neither of his two sons were capable of securing for the crown that which Charles I. had aimed at for himself and for it: Charles II. was too indifferent and too frivolous to pursue this object with the perseverance of his father, and James II, with other means, and under the influence of other ideas, made the attempt only to atone for it by a different penalty. On the whole we are inclined to think that James II. paid for his faults by his exile more justly than Charles I. by his head.

The fate of royalty in England, as decided by the events of the first half of the seventeenth century—those which preceded the death of Charles I.—offers too striking a contrast with that of the French and German monarchies to need any remark.

V.

After eleven years of a Republican rule, and of a mixed government in which all power was concentrated in the hands of a single man, the kingly power in England, thus fallen, was restored. Twenty-

eight years later it fell a second time as a victim to its own violent acts, and gave place to the settled and recognised system of a constitutional sovereign and two Houses of Parliament. Everything that took place from the accession of Charles I. to the fall of James II.—the dissensions of the former with his Parliament; the transient military epoch of the Civil War; the establishment and maintenance, difficult at first, and at last impossible, of a Republican government—everything that characterised and filled the intervening period—the personal domination of the two Cromwells, the father a man of so powerful a character, the son by nature so weak; again, later, the Restoration, the corrupt government, the hand-to-mouth policy, without grandeur and without violence, of Charles II.; and finally, the events of the second Revolution; the general insurrection of the country provoked by the imprudence, the blindness, and the tyranny of James II.—these different attempts made by hands, some of which were strong and some weak, and by minds of different calibre, lead at last to a striking and easy conclusion, which is in keeping with the history of the England of the past as it is with the history of modern times. This conclusion is, that the country, which had come to its senses for some time, was right in its decided wishes, and in the guiding principles of its conduct; it had been led away by impulse and by passion; it had made various experiments and had occasionally mistrusted

itself; but, just as it did not choose to submit to an absolute monarch, so England did not, except for one instant, believe itself capable of existing as a Republic.

Thus the attempt made by Charles I. was in vain; the Republic and the Protectorate were accidents due—the first, to the disagreement between parties, which, in spite of their political and religious dissensions, were exclusively in favour of a monarchy —the second, to the opportune presence and to the extraordinary capacity of one man.

It cannot be denied that Cromwell, though he had not the benefit of the same experience as ourselves as derived from the history of the English Revolution, from the reigns of Charles II. and James II, and from the second Restoration, nevertheless judged the spirit of the country correctly; he, who first instituted the Commonwealth as a means to overthrow Charles I, and then put it aside in order to seize upon the power himself, saw that England desired the government of one man with the assistance of Parliament. His most diffuse speeches, his most characteristic acts, his determination to behead the King, his hesitation in putting the crown on his own brow—all indicate that he thought he could abolish absolute monarchy and destroy the Republican constitution—that he could be revolutionary in his proceedings against despotism, and conservative as against the Commonwealth, without overthrowing his own power.

The Parliament of the Commonwealth disappeared to make way for the Protectorate. Attacked and undermined by the Royalist party, Parliament contributed to its own ruin by refusing to vote supplies for the army, although it had concurred in voting for war against the United Provinces. If its fall may be attributed to the mistake it thus made in thwarting the army, or to the ability of Cromwell, a stronger and more simple reason may be pointed out—the want of any strong Republican spirit in the nation. The English Republic, which was four months before it forced the city to acknowledge its existence, never was firmly established. Thousands among the clergy refused to take the oaths to it. It was in vain that it pursued and punished conspirators, that it established the electoral franchise on a wide basis, with the payment of poor-rates as a qualification, and deprived its adversaries of the right of voting; it was in vain that it possessed Cromwell as its general, or that he triumphed over the Irish insurrection, and beat the Scotch at Dunbar and the Pretender at Worcester; it was in vain that, during the war with the United Provinces, the Commonwealth out of five battles gained three victories under Admiral Blake, and announced its intention to seize Holland; it was in vain it defeated the Scotch Royalists and executed the noble and heroic Montrose, that it maintained the struggle against the Cavaliers and against the Levellers. The Commonwealth fear-

lessly repelled the movements made by Mazarin; it annoyed and then dismissed the French envoy, and alarmed France, already occupied with her internal difficulties, with the chimerical idea that the English fleet would have no difficulty in landing an invading army on her coast. In spite of all efforts, however, its existence was always insecure; for it had at one and the same time as enemies Ireland, Catholic and persecuted, Presbyterian Scotland, the Independent army, the Levellers, the Cavaliers, and the English Church, tampered and oppressed as it was. Cromwell was no longer young at the time when the Commonwealth was struggling against these embarrassments, and he might well have been impatient. Nevertheless, he did not hinder the Parliament from reducing the subsidies for the army, which in fact, and contrary to the opinion of the majority, contributed to precipitate the end of its existence; he, the man who relied on the support of the army, even thought it well to encourage hypocritically this false step. The Parliament, when it fell, was decrepit, crippled, and unpopular; and the soldiers who invaded the House to drive out the members met with no great resistance; in fact, Cromwell might perfectly have spared himself the trouble of making the speech he did, confused at the beginning and violent towards the close, in which he at first affected embarrassment, and ended with a sneer, and by which he signified to the Parliament that its existence was at an end.

There is also this remark to be made : the English Revolution, which during its first years was a state of political disturbance, and then a civil war, and which having had recourse to the guilt of regicide, eventually failed in the attempt to form a Republic, had not during the whole of its course any important bearing on general events in Europe. It would appear as if its progress never was a subject of grave disquietude, or lively curiosity, or speculation on the Continent. What was done in England afterwards produced a louder echo on the other side of the Channel, and ideas which arose in that country were then destined to cross the Straits. England during the Protectorate, during the Restoration, and during the second Revolution, was much more mixed up with the affairs of Europe than the England of Charles I. or of the Commonwealth. Richelieu died at the beginning of the war between the King and the Parliament; and the policy of Mazarin, sufficiently occupied in France, was not seriously disturbed by those civil dissensions, or by the fall of the English crown; while the naval war between the English and Dutch republics did not extend beyond the limits of their own seas.

When the Parliament of the Commonwealth was dissolved, the Royalist party, which eight years later brought about the Restoration, was numerous in England; but the Restoration was not then possible. The political shock had been too severe; the constant indecision of Charles I. had been too dis-

couraging for many friends of the monarchy; the Royalists were too scattered; and the future fate of the government and institutions, with an unknown king who had passed long years in exile, seemed too uncertain.

The Protectorate, therefore, was an inevitable incident between the Commonwealth and the Restoration, and the superior intelligence of one man made it a vigorous and powerful government.

In a false position, surrounded by adversaries, neither seconded by efficient auxiliaries, nor favoured by the prestige of high birth, Cromwell—the resolute and patient author of his own fortune—held that absolute power which Charles I. in vain tried to found. Cromwell governed England with energy, and during most of the time with a Parliament, which was, as he wished it to be, his accomplice, not his rival; for the members obtained their admission into the House only after approval by the council of the Protector. In dealing with parties at home Cromwell acted with great circumspection towards the hostile Republicans, but knowing well what he was about he was merciless in his policy towards the Royalists. Neither his conscience nor his scruples interfered with the position which he had to take up between the Royalists and the Levellers. Under a coarse exterior, and with bad taste no doubt, he was a general, a diplomatist, a great statesman, and a parliamentary orator. His foreign policy was framed with as much firmness as care. He was

sufficiently powerful and sufficiently enlightened to choose his alliances; he was able to make peace with the United Provinces, and to declare war against Spain; he signed a treaty with Sweden, and with France he kept up relations which were at once friendly and circumspect. He took up the cause of the Vaudois against the Duke of Savoy. The successes of his fleet were of service to him, and consolidated his power in England; and the vigour of his home government made him formidable in Europe. Admiral Blake, who had fought the Dutch in the time of the Commonwealth, took the British fleet to the coasts of Italy, and threatened Rome, and the Bey of Tunis; occasionally too he alarmed the French shipowners, when it was more politic to frighten than to flatter France, and paraded his victorious flag in the Mediterranean, as Charles V. had once done. The Protector never hesitated which power he should choose as an ally—Spain, fallen as she was, or France, who was sure to be as helpful to her friend as dangerous to her foe. His foreign policy was, therefore, much more bold and more simple than that of the Tudors and the Stuarts. He tried to make friends with all the Protestant states, and as soon as he was able, he made peace with the United Provinces. At the death of the Stadtholder, William II, the House of Stuart lost in Holland the sympathies which it derived from its ties of relationship with the family of Orange, and the power passed for a lengthened period into the

hands of the oligarchical party. This transfer was a loss to the cause of Royalty in England, and an advantage to the Commonwealth and the Protectorate —an advantage better understood by Cromwell than by the Parliament.

The government of Oliver Cromwell maintained itself in the country, as an authority commanding respect by its force. The Royalist party seemed to understand that time was necessary to enable it to collect and organize its resources, to re-establish harmony among its members, and to reunite all the different shades of monarchical opinion on a wider basis than that which Charles I. had desired to adopt. The Presbyterian party was dissatisfied under the Protectorate, and it is to the direction which the feelings of this party took that we must attribute the change of public opinion in favour of the Restoration. The power of Oliver Cromwell was too great, and it held men's minds too much in subjection, for this modification of the Presbyterian spirit to show itself. Accordingly I have not found in the memoirs of the time any clear account of the position and of the progress of the Presbyterian party, between the fall of the Commonwealth and the return of Charles II. The Cavaliers and the Levellers—the two opposite extremes of English society—were clamorous, were a constant cause of uneasiness, and called for the exercise of close watching or legal prosecution. Under a system which held England under a strict control, and which, in

some respects, did honour to the country, the Presbyterians were more silent, and, in a certain sense, resigned themselves to await the moment when the monarchy, which they hoped to see improved by experience and misfortune, would of itself be re-established. Clarendon, who played an important part in the councils of the monarch during his exile and after the Restoration,[1] has left a voluminous history of the Revolution as well as memoirs of himself. He tells us what passed in the secret councils of the Royalist party, but he was not aware of the progress of ideas in England itself which led to the Restoration.

With regard to the various sects, Cromwell professed liberty of conscience without respecting it. Faithful in this respect to the theories of the Independents, he did not trouble himself about any one of the sects—not even about the Anglican Church, among whose members were his most dangerous enemies—men whom he never ceased to prosecute and to punish on account of their political plots.

His government, therefore, both at home and abroad, was bold and vigorous. Towards certain men and certain parties in England, whom he desired at the same time to restrain and to humour, he adopted the same line of conduct that he held towards France. Mazarin, as wily as Cromwell, but less enterprising, intended, without truckling to the Protector, to avoid quarrelling with him, and yet to

[1] His daughter married the Duke of York.

keep in reserve the possible chances of the royal family. He had no wish for too great a coldness in their relations or too close a friendship. He refused to expel the Duke of York, who resided in France, and nevertheless he entered into a treaty of commerce with England.

Thus Cromwell was on friendly terms with the Protestant states, and circumspect in his dealings with the French minister, whom he supposed to be favourable to the Stuarts; but he was decidedly hostile to Spain.

The Parliament, the English nation, and its head long debated whether it were expedient to change the name of Protector for that of King. The reasons in favour of or against the change, which really applied only to the name under which the government was to be carried on, were carefully considered. The feeling of the country, as the recollection of the Commonwealth faded away, inclined towards monarchical government, while, at the same time, it was opposed to an hereditary Protectorate. Many partisans of the old form of government, persuaded that Cromwell was too powerful to be deposed, would willingly have proclaimed him king, since they thought that this false royalty would be the means of recalling the true one. It was precisely this reason, and the readiness which they showed, that made him draw back. "If you become king," said Whitelock, "you will have against you both the Royalists and the Republicans." A man whose ambition was as

great and blinder than that of Cromwell, would have turned Whitelock's argument in his own favour, and would have said, "Then I should have with me the partisans of the old monarchy, on account of the principle, and the partisans of the new ideas, from attachment to my person." He refused the crown, not because he did not desire it, but because he was afraid of irritating and shocking at one and the same time, the Royalists, the Republicans, and the army. He was guided in this resolution by an accurate knowledge of the feelings of the different parties. The influential majority in the country was, in his opinion, in favour of Royalty, but was little disposed to accept as a definitive or satisfactory solution a king who had been a regicide. The Republicans were not so sure of seeing the return of the dethroned dynasty, as to prefer to the actual form of government a king who had risen from their own ranks; the army, however great might be the renown of its general, was neither sufficiently united, nor yet sufficiently stoical, to see his elevation without jealousy; and the Presbyterians, who had resisted Charles I. without desiring the Revolution, now regretted that it had been brought about, especially in such a manner. They were much dissatisfied with everything that had happened since the Civil War, but they patiently waited for the issue which they hoped for; and, without entirely renouncing their political ideas, bound up as they were with their reli-

gious doctrines, they had certainly more sympathy with the exiled family than with the Protector. A certain languor and weariness too had come over the Parliamentary spirit, which had given rise to the rebellion. The Revolutionary Parliament had not exercised sufficient influence during the Civil War ; the experiment of a Commonwealth which it had made had been too unfortunate, and the Parliament, under the Protectorate, had been too incomplete, or too much kept in subjection, for the first adversaries of Charles to retain the full ardour of their zeal. The energy of Cromwell himself too had, perhaps, become a little feebler, his oratorical powers a little worn, and his confidence in the future of his family a little shaken. He was still very eloquent in his peculiar style, when he was called on to reply to the offers made him. In declining these offers, he made his ambition and his pride submit to his reason ; and it was this power of self-control, exercised first of all over his own feelings, which enabled him to die in the full possession of his power. It was this which has made men often ask whether the Protector, once crowned, could not have founded a dynasty, and whether by hindering the restoration of Charles II. he might not have given quite a different turn to the destinies of England.

If the reply to this question has generally been negative, it is because the career of his son, the successor appointed by himself, was one of such mediocrity, and because, with all his amiable and

modest qualities, that son proved too indolent to take up or defend the inheritance of his father.

When we speak of Cromwell, as when we speak of Richelieu, we must above all praise the breadth and force of his political sagacity. Cromwell was far more frequently than Richelieu obliged to have recourse to the influence and the artifices of oratory; and certainly no one ever possessed, in a greater degree, the talent of being vehement and impassioned, while he expressed the reverse of what he thought. His speeches, on decisive occasions, were frank, clear, and exhaustive, so far as the interest of the cause required it; and they did not the less keep their character of inspiration and vehemence, when the moment had come for discretion and deceit. The possession of this twofold gift of language, of equal clearness in expressing or in disguising the truth, each confused with the other under the guise of enthusiasm, doubled his power by securing for hypocrisy the same credit as for loyalty of purpose. His speech, always unpolished, was so fluent and so docile that he was able to approach, without risk, the most perilous subjects; he could experience or feign embarrassment; allow emotion to overpower him, or borrow its accent; be diffuse, and wander from the question; distract and baffle his audience; and yet be certain of again becoming at will, subtle, commanding, serious, or severe, after he had been jocular and engaging; precise and clear, after he had been long-winded and obscure. His genius was

facile; he knew how to treat with fanatical and passionate men, as well as with those who were selfish; he could laugh at the gravest matters, and attend to those which were most trifling; he could meet tranquilly the most serious obstacles, and seize with promptitude the most transient opportunities of success; he could defy the fiercest frowns of Fortune, and profit by her faintest smiles; he could be at once bold and supple. He knew how, in solemn moments, to reassure the timid, by assuming a jovial air, and how to be brutal and imperious with the masses whom he wished to convince, or affable towards those whom he was about to crush. We are almost tempted to think that, when he committed acts of violence with apparent coolness, and with some show of vulgar irony, he was acting more in accordance with his real nature, than when he seemed to be carried away by anger and impulse. With a sneer, and after all the judges of the King had refused, he affixed his signature to the order for Charles's execution; and in doing so he showed the odious courage which is denied to many criminals, of committing to writing the crime of which they are guilty. It needed all his genius, his courage, and his easy conscience, to accomplish what he did—to enable him to organize the revolutionary army, to enforce its obedience, and to gain so many great battles against the royal troops. He reigned alone in the midst of parties carried away by passion; he destroyed with his sword the Monarchy and the

Commonwealth; he first braved the hatred of the Royalists, and afterwards tried to conjure down and allay that of the Republicans. In the midst of factions he stood firm between those who went beyond and those who fell short of his ideas; he tempted by appearances those whom he could not satisfy with realities; he gave free scope for action to those whom he believed incapable of harming him, as an excuse for depriving of it those whom he feared; he inspired England, while he was in the possession of power, with a patience similar to that which he had himself exercised in winning it. In spite of his barbarous proceedings, and his indifference to the shedding of blood, he was as completely master of himself in what he did, as he was in what he said, whether to his Republican adversaries, or to the powers of Europe. The victor of Naseby and Dunbar—of Prince Rupert and Montrose—understanding as he did the advantage of military glory, and the facility it gives in handling a government—might well have dreamed of conquests on the Continent. But as he refused the crown of England, so he sought no territorial conquest beyond that of a single Spanish colony.

On the day of the Protector's death, many of the English Royalists must have looked upon the return and accession of Charles II. as probable.

Under the Protectorate of Richard Cromwell, the Republicans, in the army and in the country, made an attempt to arrest the general movement which

impelled England towards the Restoration. The monarchical party of every shade showed little impatience, for they felt certain of succeeding, and succeeding more completely in proportion as events were allowed to follow a natural and less rapid course; they felt sure, too, that the person of the Protector would be no hindrance to their wishes. They were, if anything, anxious rather to know if he would keep his place long enough to allow the transition from one system to another to take place without precipitation. He succeeded without trouble to the power of his father, much as a son succeeds to a family estate, but he was subject to no illusion as to the future. Totally devoid of pride, timid, with no turn for war, allied both by taste and habits to the Cavaliers, gentle and amiable without dignity, Richard Cromwell was incapable of inspiring either confidence or hatred. He had indifference enough to allow him to renounce power, but not the small amount of will necessary to make it respected while he held it. Many events of that period—which would seem a sad one had it not prepared the way as the morrow of a memorable day—recall, on a smaller scale, what occurred during the Protectorate which had just ended. The behaviour of the Presbyterians was the same; the same divisions showed themselves in the army and between the army and the Parliament; there were, moreover, the same dissensions between the Parliament and the City. But these facts and these symptoms were important but

for a moment; they showed diminished confidence on the part of those who resisted the movement, and diminished anxiety on the part of those who followed and sympathised with it. Lambert, the Republican general, expelled the Parliament, as Cromwell had done, but the Parliament returned in spite of Lambert and the republicans of the army; and, when the troops of Monk and those of Lambert stood face to face, those of the latter, as well as their general himself, were by no means eager to come to blows.

Monk entered into the feeling of the country, but exaggerated it; the slowness of his advance gave the Republican factions, which had been kept down by the Protector, the time and the courage to re-appear for a moment. His line of conduct consisted in bringing the Royalists again into Parliament without any unnecessary shock, and in quietly removing from the ranks and from the higher grades of the army of the Commonwealth the most violent men. When the Parliament was thus complete, and the army had undergone this purification, he still delayed in declaring his intentions. Acting very differently from those who in times of sudden change, by their impatience and vehemence, run the risk of blame from their former associates, Monk called himself a Republican when the general movement was Royalist, and when the Commonwealth was put aside, and thus laid himself open to the same reproach and to suspicion from his future friends.

He preferred, it is said, riches to glory; and if he was without vanity, his principles were lax, and his ambition was moderate and cold. He made his reputation by counting on the tendency of men's minds to impute depth and to look for mystery on the part of a man who professed to lead the country towards so great a change, and who accomplished that task slowly and without noise. The Restoration would have been completed without him, possibly with greater rapidity, but less peaceably. The day when Charles II. placed his foot on the soil of England, the Cavaliers were transported with joy, and the Presbyterians were full of hope; the army, which had expelled the Parliament by the orders of Cromwell, showed great coldness, and the Puritans had withdrawn out of sight. The eager crowd hastened to meet the King.

Mazarin, who was more occupied in making peace with Spain than in interfering with the affairs of England, had signed the Treaty of the Pyrenees in the year preceding the Restoration. The ambassador of the English Commonwealth in Paris had, to the last, been well received by the Cardinal. The French ambassador in London had a short time before, in his intercourse with Monk, expressed, in an indifferent tone, the desire of his Government for the Restoration; and he had made to the general himself offers of service and overtures which might have aroused his ambition. Mazarin only viewed the revolutionary policy of England as an object of

interest secondary to his own. He was determined to quarrel neither with the Commonwealth, the Protectorate, nor the Restoration.

In Holland, the government of John de Witt regretted the loss of the English Commonwealth, although it had made war on them; the government of the Restoration necessarily had more sympathy with the house of Orange than with the party of the Estates, and the Grand Pensionary placed what he considered the home interests of the Netherlands above all considerations of foreign policy.

France and Holland, the two nations nearest to England, were likewise those which had the most uninterrupted intercourse with it, and where events happening in the three kingdoms were most talked about.

The English Revolution, after having gone through a civil war, an attempt at a republic, a dictatorship, and a restoration, ended by establishing a form of government so powerful that those who were charged with the greatest European interests had to look carefully to it. The attempt to found an absolute monarchy, made by Charles I, was renewed with the same ill-success by the second of his sons, and the kingly government was constituted, after a second revolution, under those conditions which Charles I. would never consent to admit. We shall soon treat—with reference to the circumstances which brought the Prince of Orange to England—

of the last years of the government of the Stuarts. It is at the accession of William III. that we are enabled to judge of the complete change that the seventeenth century effected in the condition of the English crown. But even thirty years before, when the Protector fell, and when Charles II. returned, it was quite clear that the country would not end by giving to the descendants of Charles I. that which it had refused to him; and the events of the first half of the century were quite sufficient to make it clear that, in future, there would be a marked difference between the nature of the English government and that of the continental monarchies. Charles II. and James II. might have arrested the course of events: the first, by making himself more independent of foreign influences, and by adopting more frankly the institutions of his country; the second, by pursuing a line of conduct entirely different from the one he followed. But had these two sovereigns been reasonable, instead of being, the one dissipated and wild, the other blind and tyrannical —had the House of Stuart retained possession of the throne by the exercise of moderation and wisdom— England might indeed have gone on in a tranquil and satisfied manner at home, but she would not have secured the amount of power she acquired under William III. She would never, in the general affairs of Europe, by her alliances, by her energetic intervention in continental and maritime war, and by the genius and the glorious tenacity of her king,

have turned the scale against the grasping ambition of Louis XIV.

We do not exaggerate the importance of the political part played by William III, if we attribute to him this overwhelming and decisive influence on the destinies of England.

The events of this Revolution have been narrated and judged, with all the authority of learning and ability, by a most eminent writer. It would be useless for the reader, and out of the question for me to speak of it, after him, otherwise than by offering these short observations, which come within the range of my work, and which could not be omitted without leaving a gap.

V.

WILLIAM III.

I.

THE wars which broke out after the Reformation are known in history by the name of the "Religious Wars" (*Guerres de Religion*). We have previously related how they were carried on, in the name of the ancient faith, by the immediate descendants of Charles V. in Spain. The collateral descendants of the Emperor in Austria revived them at a later date under other conditions, and with an alloy of other motives. Immediately after the Reformation, religion itself was the dominant element in the struggle. The soldiers of Philip II. in the Low Countries, his ships of war in the English Channel, and his partisans in France, all fought under the standard of the Roman Catholic faith. Their adversaries were "the Reformers," and the causes of the conflicts which, both before and subsequent to this epoch, dyed the soil of Europe with blood—political rivalry and the struggle for preponderance—seem, in the second half of the sixteenth century, to lie concealed under

another reason quite as capable of stirring men to arms.

The King of Spain, in his struggle with the Calvinists of Holland, fought for the maintenance of his authority, and for the extension of his dominions; as all men who have the disposal of military force have ever done, and probably will continue to do. But at that time such was not his avowed motive; what he professed to aim at was the destruction of heresy.

In proportion as the origin and the first shock of the Reformation became more remote, as the shadow of Charles V. faded away into the past, and as his blind and feeble successors allowed the power of Spain to slip through their hands, on the one side, the predominant influence in Europe, which by the right of conquest had fallen to the share of the illustrious Charles, passed into other hands; and, on the other, the war gradually and slowly lost the religious character it wore under the banners of Spain, so that the true and irrepressible motive of quarrels between great states again appeared on the surface of history. This transformation—this return to the original principle of rivalry for the possession of political power—occupies the whole of the seventeenth century, during which the two elements of politics and religion continued to work in combination with each other. This double character was clearly seen in the Thirty Years' War. It was the character, more or less evident, of the wars which

Louis XIV. carried on against Holland, against the League of Augsburg, and against the Revolution in England. Last of all, the War of Succession in Spain, which closes the reign of Louis XIV, and with which the eighteenth century opens, was again founded on a principle purely political. The interests of religion have no share in it, and the Catholic states, which take part in it, and which fight with each other, no longer think of checking the progress of the Reformation.

There is one portion of this period of a century and a half, from the abdication of Charles V. (1555) to the Treaty of Utrecht (1713)—along and memorable epoch, in the course of which so much was changed and removed, and so many powers rose or succumbed—during which the United Provinces of Holland, as a republic, as an element of revolution, or as a maritime and commercial power, played an important part in the politics and quarrels of Europe. They advanced systematically; they showed heroic courage in acquiring and defending their liberty, and an admirable patience in consolidating their power; they exhibited the greatest activity and intelligence in extending their commerce and in enriching their country, and a wonderful dignity, constancy, and coolness, in the pursuit of one and the same object—the noblest to which men can devote themselves, — the independence of their country and the independence of Europe.

What we have just said of the mixed character

of the wars of the seventeenth century applies exactly to the position of the United Provinces during this period.

In fact, after a series of events which occupied more than fifty years, the position of affairs had completely changed. In this period the United Provinces had by their own efforts freed themselves, and established their independence; the long quarrel between them and Spain had ended in a decisive victory for the former; the mother country, utterly exhausted, ill governed, and with abundant occupation at home and abroad, had recognised as a fact the necessity of sacrificing the insurgent provinces, although, to avoid the humiliation of a treaty of peace, it had signed a truce. The existence of the United Provinces had now been satisfactorily secured; it had even been accepted by their former master, and completely recognised by the rest of Europe. The danger for them had ceased to come from Spain, but it soon appeared in another quarter; since Cardinal Mazarin was wise enough to see that the conclusion of a definitive peace between the United Provinces and Spain was not for the advantage of France, and that the struggle ought to continue, or, at any rate, be capable of renewal. The judgment of Mazarin in this matter was perfectly natural and correct. The policy of conquest, which shortly afterwards prevailed, was not in his thoughts, nor in those of the child whom he was initiating into the art of government. On the contrary, he

himself signed the Peace of Westphalia, and the Treaty of the Pyrenees, and his ambition was to close the great war and leave Europe at peace. Yet, notwithstanding this, he felt instinctively that a certain amount of rivalry, and the want of perfect accord between Spain and the United Provinces, were in the interests of France.

In this judgment he was clearly right; for when peace was once concluded between the two powers, and when Spain had once made the sacrifice, it would be to the advantage of both to forget their old animosities and to unite their armies. They formed, it is true, henceforth, two distinct countries, but they would together protect the territories on the southern borders of Holland, which still remained Spanish, and which were soon to be exposed to the encroaching policy of the age.

When the necessity of this alliance was understood (as it was at a later period by William of Orange), in the sense which Mazarin had apprehended, then the principles which guided the arms of the United Provinces were so far affected by events as to assume that mixed character which we have recognised in the wars of the seventeenth century. That is to say, two states, which religious differences had for a long period made enemies to each other, forgot their animosities, and came to an understanding.

The system of William III, who appeared on the scene soon after the principle of religious wars had

changed its character, was in fact to unite Catholic and Protestant nations against an adversary who menaced all equally without reference to their faith.

But between the time when Spain and Holland signed a treaty, which Mazarin was sorry to see ratified, and the time when William took into his own hands the affairs of his own country, and shortly afterwards those of more general interest, a certain interval elapsed, which we may consider as a period of transition. During this interval the policy of Holland was undecided, and seemed as it were to be feeling for its true course; it deceived itself as to the imminence of various dangers; and, although it had at its disposal a considerable force, it hesitated to give to that force a decided and energetic direction.

This period of transition, as we term it, separates the Peace of Munster, by which the independence of the United Provinces was definitively secured, from the time when William was invested with the chief authority in Holland as Stadtholder (1649-1672).

The policy of John de Witt, who had the management of public affairs during this period of twenty years, was not, if we may so express ourselves, all of one piece. De Witt assumed the government of the country when William II. died, and when his son, who subsequently became William III, was an infant. We cannot say that he governed during a minority, because he devoted all his energies

to induce the country to look upon the office of Stadtholder as an evil, and to bring about the suppression of the office. When a statesman—especially one so eminent as was the Grand Pensionary—devotes himself to one idea, and applies to it his courage, and all the resources of his genius, it is often difficult to decide whether he was actuated by ambition or by conscience: but it is still more difficult to do so if the scheme itself fails before it is fully developed. We have already spoken more than once of the rivalry between the party of the Estates and that of the Stadtholder. De Witt represented in Holland the first of these two parties; that is to say, a certain patrician class, which was rich and enlightened, and from which the members of the principal municipal bodies, and a certain number of those of the Provincial Estates, were selected. This class was more powerful from its wealth and its intelligence than from its numbers. We have said that it was hostile to the Stadtholder, whose chief object had been to develop the material welfare and the military spirit of the country, and who urged, as the first object, the necessity of a strong defensive position. The representatives of the municipal oligarchy, on the other hand, thought that, not only in form but in substance, the government of the United Provinces ought to be republican, and that the Stadtholder was a military dictator. This class did not deny the conditions or the necessity for the defence of the country, and

many eminent military men had sprung from their ranks; but it went against them to see too much authority in the hands of one man. De Witt, to a certain degree, personified the hereditary feeling of this class, of which Barneveldt had been the leader before him. He shared in the jealousy which the towns had manifested against William II, and he advocated the maintenance of a small army, while he endeavoured to educate the mind of the young prince in the principles of the oligarchical party. He saw with regret the restoration of the King in England, because he foresaw that there would always be a common feeling between the restored Stuarts and the family of Orange-Nassau, inasmuch as the widow of the last Stadtholder was the sister of Charles II. He would willingly have lived on in alliance with Oliver Cromwell, or with a Commonwealth in England; for he had too much sense not to see that, after the death of Mazarin, the country bordering on the United Provinces, threatened as it was by the arms of France, and defended by the feeble power of Spain, would run great risks; and that the old friendship of France for the Dutch republic was about to cease. The efforts, however, of a conciliatory nature which he made to counteract these dangers, do not say much for his judgment or his foresight. He would willingly have treated for the partition of the Spanish provinces, a scheme of which there had been serious question in the time of Cardinal Richelieu. He still had the old Dutch feeling of

antagonism against Spain; and he would have signed without hesitation any treaty that aggrandized France at the expense of the ancient possessors of the Low Countries. The ideas of De Witt, as to the best policy to follow, were shared, at the time of William II.'s death, by a considerable portion of the population. Their tendency was to suppress everything in the attributes of the office of Stadtholder that had a monarchical character; to lean for support on the Provincial Estates, especially on those of Holland, which was the centre of the government, and the chief stronghold of the oligarchy; and to come to terms with republican England on all questions concerning commercial interests and maritime rivalry.[1] Thus, to be on his guard against monarchical England, and against the influence of the royal family; to devote all the energies of a diplomacy fertile in resources to shunning a war, and preserving the good will of France, which had hitherto been of such value to the United Provinces, and whenever he was forced by events into a different course, to yield only for the moment to the necessity which he regretted, and return as speedily as possible to what he considered as the proper system;—such, in a few words, was the policy which De Witt acted on during the whole of his

[1] The Navigation Act of 1650, the object of which was to prevent the Dutch vessels from importing into England any goods except those produced in Holland, was retained in the Treaty of Westminster 1654, signed by England and the Estates-General.

administration. At first his views were shared by many men, because the power of the Stadtholder, who had just died, had left animosities and jealousies rankling behind him ; but the real fault in his ideas, resting as they did on a reactionary feeling against the authority of a particular family, was the fact that during the years which followed, and in the midst of events important enough to justify a change of policy, they obstinately preserved their character of passion and personal feeling. History pardons a great deal to a man who, like the Grand Pensionary, dies a victim to a doctrine which from that time forward is made to assume the dignity of a conviction. Much that strikes us now in the situation of the United Provinces as a matter beyond dispute, produced at the time but a slight impression on the mind of the Grand Pensionary. The United Provinces, but lately a republic, had come successful out of many dangers ; they had hitherto been fortunate, and had been powerful for some years ; they had shown resolution, prudence, patience, and all the qualities which tend to the prosperity of states, whether they be old or young. That which strikes us as evidently the best policy for the United Provinces to adopt, with regard to nations with whom they were allied,—for instance, with France under Mazarin and Louis XIV, with England under Cromwell and Charles II, with Spain under Philip IV,—that which soon struck William of Orange, and was a subject of anxiety to those men about

De Witt himself, whatever was their shade of opinion or their class, who at first had shared his views and maintained him at the head of affairs—all this, we repeat, produced but little effect upon the Grand Pensionary. The Provinces were possibly more prosperous under his administration than at any other time of their existence; and it is not difficult sometimes to be deceived as to the moral condition of a country in which there is a great increase of wealth, and where every one is materially prosperous. We must also acknowledge that the House of Orange had caused great jealousy, and that the resolution of the Estates which made the office of Stadtholder in one, or in several of the Provinces, incompatible with the office of commander-in-chief of the army, and abolished altogether the office of Stadtholder of the Province of Holland—a resolution called the "Perpetual Edict," supported by De Witt to the utmost of his power—was, at the time it was adopted, in appearance at least, popular. We must likewise acknowledge that, when the nation perceived that her maritime interests were threatened by England, the Grand Pensionary did not hesitate to declare war against the English Commonwealth, though he looked on it as his natural ally, and that the war was vigorously prosecuted. He subsequently deserted his own natural policy to conclude with England under the Restoration, and with Sweden, the treaty known under the name of "The Triple Alliance." This treaty had relation to the first

expedition of Louis XIV. into the Spanish provinces, which he was pleased to term a royal progress—not of a campaign ; inasmuch as he pretended that those provinces came to him by succession in right of his wife.[1] Nevertheless, the war against Cromwell was distasteful to De Witt, and he did nothing to prolong it: he disliked the Triple Alliance, and he made no attempt to make it last. But was it not strange that he should give up, without regret, allies whose object it was to restrain France within the limits laid down by the Treaty of the Pyrenees? The "Memoirs of the Count d'Estrades," at that time the Ambassador of France in Holland, give us an insight into all the efforts made by "the great King" to cultivate a good understanding with De Witt, and to encourage and unite together all those who then belonged to what was called the French party. These men believed that the maintenance of peace was possible; they approved De Witt's conduct, when, in order not to break with France, he went the length of refusing an offer made by the Spanish Government to allow the United Provinces to occupy several maritime towns of Flanders, which Spain did not feel itself strong enough to defend; in short, they flattered

[1] By virtue of what was called "dévolution"—an ancient law in the duchy of Brabant—which favoured the children of the first marriage to the prejudice of the others. The Infanta Maria Theresa, the Queen of France, was a child of the first marriage; Charles II. of Spain, of the second wife. (*Histoire de Louvois*, by C. Rousset, vol. i. cap. ii. Coutumes de Brabant—Coutumes de Malines.)

themselves that they should be able to continue with France, under the new system, the relations which had existed previously.

But Louis XIV, after the campaign of Flanders in 1667, made war upon Holland in 1672, because he was angry with her for having entered into the Triple Alliance in 1668, with England and Sweden, and because he was persuaded that the Spanish Provinces would never fall definitively into his hands so long as they were backed by the bulwark of the United Provinces.

This was the ruin of De Witt's party; it put an end to his government, and gave the signal for the popular movement in which he perished. There was but one cry among the people: the military and political powers were again vested in one person; the Stadtholdership was re-established, with its former prerogatives, and made hereditary; and at the age of two and twenty, William of Orange was invested with this supreme authority.

De Witt possessed talents, courage, experience, and ability to an eminent degree. He made all his great qualities, his boldness of spirit, and his strong sense subservient to a policy which had outlived its time, and which was not justified by events. His attempts to stop the progress of Louis XIV. and to pacify his own country were without result. A movement which was stronger than himself, and which his genius did not foresee, swept him away with his convictions, his influence, and his fortunes.

His capacity, his firmness, his long and powerful administration, and his cruel death, have nevertheless made the Grand Pensionary one of those who must ever live in history.[1]

II.

THE leading principle of the reign of Louis XIV. does not belong to that monarch. It dates from the end of the fifteenth century, and from the time of the first invasions of Italy by France under Charles VIII. and under Louis XIII. It is in fact the principle of prolonged antagonism to the Spanish monarchy, which began after Louis XI. had closed, by the Treaty of Pecquigny, the struggle of centuries with England. It is the principle of war with the dynasty of Charles V.—the elder branch of which reigned in Spain, while the descendants of the younger branch occupied the imperial throne of Germany. It is the principle of breaking up that vast monarchy for the benefit of France alone, and not for the general benefit of European independence. But the Spanish house, so formidable

[1] Thorbecke, *Historische Schetsen*—Mémoires du Comte d'Estrades. The negotiations which preceded the war of Louis XIV. in Flanders, and later still the war in Holland, are of great importance in the history of that monarch. Here they are scarcely indicated, but I propose in a second volume to devote a special chapter to the general subject of the diplomatic correspondence of Louis XIV.

under Charles V, and still so strong under the personal sway of Philip II, lost its rank and its power under the successors of the latter. Ministers, whose ability was guided by selfishness rather than ambition, took the place of great princes, and allowed the sinews of government to become relaxed, the military and financial resources of the country to be wasted, and its honour to decay and perish. Under his father-in-law, Philip IV, as well as under Charles II, a sickly child with feeble intellect, Louis XIV. had nothing to fear from Spain. If he felt disposed to take some portion of the magnificent inheritance of Charles V, he had no cause to apprehend reprisals on the part of Spain. At the death of Mazarin, or to speak more correctly, immediately after the death of Philip IV, when Charles II, far from giving evidence that he would ever have the strength to govern, made it clear that he would not have strength to live, the early ambition of Louis XIV. sought to prevent the junior branch of the Austrian dynasty from succeeding to the inheritance of the elder branch. He had no desire to see reconstituted under the imperial sceptre of Germany the monarchy which Charles V. had at one time wished to transmit entire to his son, but which, worn out and weakened, he subsequently allowed without regret to be divided between his son and his brother. Before making war upon Austria, Louis XIV. cast his eyes upon a portion of the territory belonging to Spain, and the expedition

against Holland, begun in 1672, for the purpose of absorbing the Spanish provinces by overwhelming them, opened the series of his vast enterprises.

His first great war was, historically speaking, his first great fault. He failed in his object: for at the end of six campaigns, during which the French armies obtained great and deserved success, Holland remained unconquered. Thus was Europe warned that the lust of conquest of a young monarch, who did not himself possess military genius, but who found in his generals the resources and ability in which he was himself deficient, would soon threaten her independence. Condé and Turenne, after having been rebellious subjects under the Regency, were about to become the first and the most illustrious lieutenants of Louis XIV.

Europe, however, though warned, was not immediately ready to defend herself. It was from Austria, more directly exposed to the dangers of the great war now commencing, that the first systematic resistance ought to have come. But Austria was not prepared to play such a part; and the Emperor Leopold possessed neither the genius nor the wish for it. He was, in fact, nothing more than the nominal head of Germany. The wars of Charles V. and the Thirty Years' War had weakened the Imperial power, and since that time it had found, neither in the men at the head of affairs nor in events themselves, any means of repairing or adding to its lost strength. At that epoch Russia took no

part in the affairs of Central Europe. Sweden, which since the days when she had been governed and rendered famous by the sword of Gustavus Adolphus, had learnt to mix herself up in the affairs of Europe, was undecided in her policy ; her government hesitated between one alliance and the other, and did not feel called on to take any vigorous part, as it did not foresee the time when the French armies would cross the Elbe and threaten her own borders. The Electorate of Brandenburg was then but a third-rate power in Germany. The Electors of Mayence and of Cologne on the Rhine, as well as Munster and Neuburg, were successively flattered or threatened by French diplomacy ; but they were more likely to bar the passage against the forces of the empire than to oppose the arms of Louis XIV. Spain, as we have already said, weakened and languishing under an incompetent government, was not even in a condition to defend its own possessions. The position of England with regard to France was anything but well defined under the government of the Restoration. The King, Charles II, with amiable and pleasant manners, a fickle character, and expensive and luxurious tastes, found it convenient to accept the friendship of the French monarch, and was not shocked at the idea of secretly accepting his money. He was too indolent and too frivolous to begin an open quarrel with his Parliament, and to push things to an extremity, like his father before him, and his brother

after him; but the difficulty in getting on with them from day to day was constant and notorious, consequently he dispensed with them as often as he could, and preferred taking the pay of the King of France to asking money from his own people.[1]

The tendency of Charles, therefore, was, openly when he could, and secretly if it were necessary, to maintain a personal alliance with Louis XIV.; to yield to the House of Commons at the last extremity; to have no fixed policy of his own; to gain partisans by the affability of his manners and his good humour; to yield to ideas which were opposed to his own because he did not care about the matter; and to avoid at once taking any decided line, or exposing himself to any catastrophe.

Such was the state of affairs in Europe when William of Orange first made his appearance on the stage. He had succeeded to the power of the Grand Pensionary, and had been summoned by general acclamation to assume, under the ancient name of Stadtholder, the whole of the military and political authority. What he did was this, he organized a system of defence; began a struggle against Louis XIV, which lasted thirty years; sustained it with an energy and a constancy that were admirable; and revived in his own person the glorious memories of the House of Orange—more especially that of the illustrious prince who had devoted his life and his genius to the foundation

[1] For instance, the sale of Dunkirk to France.

of the state. In his character and his actions, he was all that the Dutch esteem most: he was cool, courageous, patient, straightforward, and simple in his habits. He inherited all the confidence and affection which had of old belonged to his family, and the reproaches which were lavished upon him during the course of his glorious career never came from his countrymen. His great fault, if we may say so, consisted in his being too much a Dutchman.

The old question of supremacy, which Louis XIV. wished to fight out as a duel with the House of Austria, was now about to change its aspect, and, owing to the presence of an unexpected genius, to bring into the quarrel other powers besides the two original competitors. The foe of Louis XIV. ought by rights to have been born on the banks of the Danube, and not on the shores of the North Sea. In fact, it was Austria that at that moment most needed a man of genius, either on the throne or at the head of affairs. The events of the century would, in this case, doubtless have followed a different course: the war would have been less general, and the maritime nations would not have been involved in it to the same degree; it might have been limited to the Pyrenees, to the states bordering on the Rhine, and to the Alps. Moreover, the English Government and the dynasty of the Stuarts would have been less mixed up in the struggle, and the whole state of affairs in England would have been

different. The treaties of peace would have been signed in some small place in France or Germany, and not in two towns and a village in Holland, such as Nimeguen, Ryswick, and Utrecht. How do we know too that an alliance between England and France, which is not beyond the range of probability, might not have saved the throne of the Stuarts?

It is for these reasons that posterity blames Louis XIV. so severely for having commenced the war with Holland. The logic of facts seldom agrees with that of men; and the favours, as well as the reverses, of fortune console or strike us more frequently far from the moment, and far from the spot when and where the most vigilant foresight had expected, and had prepared to meet the blow. No one foresaw the effects of this war. Lionne, who at the beginning of the reign had managed foreign affairs with such consummate ability and wisdom, had just died; and no negotiator charged with conducting the diplomatic negotiations of Louis XIV, had, after him, the authority or the knowledge which he had displayed. His death occurred in the year which preceded the first campaign against Holland.

But if it was not given to any one to calculate and to foresee the events of this period—the failures and the miseries which embittered the close of the reign of Louis XIV, the domestic misfortunes of the dynasty, the will of the King of Spain, the

dethronement of James II. by his son-in-law, and finally the establishment of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain,—if these distant results were beyond the reach of human foresight, a calm and attentive eye would nevertheless have perceived some matters more near at hand. It might have been surmised that unless great care were taken the descendant of Philip II. and the descendant of William the Silent might help each other; that to attack Holland, lying beyond the Spanish provinces, was in effect to force her into an alliance with Spain, and that eventually the interest of common defence could not fail to bring nearer together the two branches of the Austrian family, whose probable and complete reunion as possessor of the entire inheritance of Charles V. must cause great anxiety to France.

William of Orange found himself in a position soon to form the Triple Alliance which the very policy of Louis XIV. suggested. For France to attack Holland, when her object was eventually to reach Austria, and keep her out of the Spanish succession, was to make enemies at one and the same time of Spain, of Austria, and of Holland. But if it afterwards required considerable efforts on the part of William of Orange to maintain this alliance, it demanded still more energy to extend it. It formed part of the Stadtholder's ulterior plans to combine the union formed between himself and the two branches of the Austrian family, with the old

Anglo-Swedish Triple Alliance, which had just been dissolved under the strong pressure brought to bear on it by Louis XIV. He thus hoped to constitute, more in the interest of the balance of power in Europe than for the gratification of his own ambition, a vast coalition which should unite—besides secondary states such as Brandenburg, Sweden, and the provinces on the Rhine—countries like Austria, Spain, Savoy, and, some day or other, England. To attain his object he had to overcome obstacles which eventually wore him out. First of all, he had to contend with the never-failing ill-will of those powers whom it was his constant endeavour to bring together by some common bond of union; then the fluctuating policy of the Stuarts, which was more frequently in the interest of France than in that of Europe, as well as the quarrels between the Crown and the House of Commons, interfered with his plans; and lastly, the want of firmness in the Emperor Leopold, the embarrassed condition and weakness of Spain, and the divided state of public opinion in the United Provinces themselves, threw great difficulties in his way.

The name of William of Orange, glorious as it is, claims also the respect of all men. His patient ability was not taxed with perpetual double dealing, as is the case with some other eminent politicians; and posterity never seriously imputed to him the charge of having succeeded by intrigue in dethroning his father-in-law, because he was wise

enough to wait until the crown of England, undermined by the errors of the wearer, was about of itself to crumble into dust. The most remarkable and the most successful actions of his life did benefit and were meant to benefit others, quite as much as himself; and it was his good fortune that the gratification of his own personal ambition was a secondary matter as compared with the importance of the general result. Thus, when he supplanted the Grand Pensionary de Witt, he assumed power in order to defend and save his country; and when he dethroned his father-in-law, and ascended the throne of England, it was to found in that country a government, the strength and duration of which are sufficient evidence that it was in accordance with the wishes of the country. Moreover, on most of those occasions when he fought for Protestantism, he had the advantage of attaching to himself, from interested motives, two of the principal Catholic states of Europe.

His character was as singular as it was strong, and his destiny as remarkable as it was glorious. His life, like his person, presented great contrasts. William of Orange checked the power of Louis XIV, while at the same time he scarcely ever was successful against the French monarch; he was not present at the most important naval battle of the time—that of La Hogue—where the French fleet was defeated. He was the author of the great League; he signed with Louis XIV. two treaties

for the partition of the Spanish possessions—which he concluded as the acknowledged head of the coalition, but which brought to him individually no direct benefit; he was unsuccessful in nearly all the battles which took place during the first half of the reign of Louis XIV, and was beaten by Condé and by Luxembourg; he died before the epoch when fortune was for some time to desert the King of France; he was more honoured by posterity than during his life; and was recompensed rather by ulterior results than by immediate success. At two and twenty he suggested at the moment the means of preventing the invasion of his country, and forced Europe to give him her confidence, without justifying it or paying for it by his victories or his conquests; by his tenacity, by his coolness in reverses, by his patience, and by the lassitude and exhaustion of his enemies, he gained that which the fortune of war had denied him; in order to comply with the schemes of another—schemes by no means conceived in his favour—he contracted a marriage the most advantageous and most fortunate which he could have made.[1] Such was the manner in which his short existence was occupied.

It has often been asked what a man so firm and so sure of himself desired; what so lofty a spirit sought to attain; and how much an intellect so clear and so sagacious foresaw, whilst he directed war without passion, and public affairs without

[1] With Princess Mary of York, daughter of James II.

emotion, and took part in religious movements without violence? This nature, so difficult to understand, has been studied with attention. William of Orange has been reproached, not with a passion for war, but with its abuse, with filial insensibility, with favouritism, and with indifference, not as to the political means he employed, but as regarded the men who served him. His courage was dauntless on the field of battle; he was bold and enterprising, though ready to temporize; he was both supple and obstinate, silent and confiding. At heart he was simple, loyal, and laborious; he gave up his time to the affairs which were of the most importance to the world, while he loved quiet and a country life. He was the representative of a revolution directed against absolute power; but with all this he remained unpopular, to the day of his death, in the very country which owed to him its freedom from tyranny. He was remarkably sagacious in the conduct of questions of general policy, and still he showed a want of skill and adroitness in conducting the parliamentary government of his adopted country. A character like that of William of Orange—harsh and cold in its honesty, indifferent as to the displeasure it causes to others, when its own convictions are formed, and the object to be attained clearly defined—must of necessity make many enemies. He had likewise many sincere friends, whose affection he retained all his life, and for whose sake he sacrificed important interests. He

was married to an English princess, and was King of England without knowing much of the language; his health was always feeble, and yet he was as indifferent to bodily suffering as he was to personal danger; he was hardened to fatigue, but prematurely old; his countenance was not attractive, but it was full of character, with a glance of fire, and a nose hooked like the beak of an eagle; sickly and asthmatical as he was, he was more loved by his charming wife Mary than ever were Louis XIV. or Charles II, with all their gallantry, by any woman. The King of France has been justly blamed for having thoughtlessly carried the war into Holland, and thus roused the genius and armed the hands of such a man.

It was not, however, during these first years, when Condé was in the Dutch provinces, when Vauban was laying siege to Maestricht, and when Turenne was immortalizing his name by his campaigns in Westphalia—of which he gives such graphic accounts in his Memoirs—it was not when Louis XIV, or rather his generals, were gaining battles and taking towns, that he could be expected to admit his attack on Holland to have been a mistake. The formation of the Grand Alliance furnished the French at first only with the subject of a Latin epigram, expressive of confidence on their own part and contempt for their enemies—sentiments which no one about the French monarch dreamt of contradicting, whilst Condé was victorious over the Dutch, Turenne over

the Imperialists, and Crequi over the Spaniards. If we except the success of De Ruyter over the combined fleet of France and England, the Dutch war may be taken to be the most brilliant military episode in Louis XIV.'s reign. He certainly did not himself fight the battle of Seneffe, or direct in person the siege of so many towns with such signal success, any more than he wrote the *Misanthrope* or *Athalie*, which have also contributed to his glory: but the favours of fortune were so brilliant, and the praises lavished on him, though not remarkable for delicacy, were so frequent and so noisy, that a more austere man than Louis XIV. might well have been intoxicated by them. He may be excused, if, without being mad, he believed that all the exploits and all the remarkable productions of the age were attributable to him, and that his genius might be placed on the same level as his triumphs.

It is a most curious fact that Louis XIV. was as much exhausted by his victories as William of Orange was strengthened and raised by his defeats. The days of disaster which overwhelmed the old age of the French monarch, and which gave him the opportunity of showing the courage and pride that were in him—those days had not yet arrived. No one could then have surmised that the monarch who was so successful and so young at forty, would soon afterwards cease to be young, and then would cease to be successful; that he would live through thirty years of feebleness and *ennui*, and at the last,

through ten years of reverses; that the men most eminent in war, and in the cabinet, would disappear one after the other, and that, after having had successors of mean ability, they would have others whose action would be disastrous; that France would lose its conquests, and would see foreign troops on its own soil; and, lastly, that the English nation would expel the dynasty of the Stuarts, and, under a new government, add enormous weight to the coalition against France. Such an insight into the distant future is given to no man, nor can any one overleap in his mind the third of a century, especially when history moved at so rapid a rate, and events succeeded each other so quickly. But taking a more limited view, a disinterested and sober eye might certainly have recognised what was clearly seen and foretold by Colbert. A war like this against combined Europe was too costly a luxury for the country to bear; and military successes in Spain and in Germany exhausted the treasury without bringing anything into it. It was also obvious that the alliance of the King of France and of England was a merely superficial union. Charles II. remained the ally of Louis XIV. only on the condition of doing without his Parliament, and drawing secret subsidies from the French monarch. The war with the States-General of Holland was unpopular in England, and the King of France had fewer friends in the country than the head of the Dutch Republic. It was obvious that the promises which Charles II.—who

was utterly indifferent in all matters, even in those of religion—made to Louis XIV, that he would protect and promote the interests of the Catholics on all occasions, could not but be most distasteful to the Anglican spirit of the Parliament. Measures altogether in the interest of the English Church had been wrung from the King by the Commons and by public opinion. The French monarch, through his active and able ambassadors, endeavoured, by every sort of means, to secure friends among the men of influence in England, but his success was small. On the other hand, it was quite evident that in Holland the party of De Witt—the old French party—although still powerful in some towns, did not carry with it the majority of the Dutch people. Louis XIV, whose finances were exhausted, was very soon anxious to make peace, even on the morrow of his most brilliant victories; whilst William of Orange, beaten and retreating, ardently desired the continuance of the war.

Such was the true position of affairs: it was fully understood by William of Orange in Holland, by Colbert in France, and by all the enlightened men of the House of Commons in England.

The diplomatic correspondence of the French agents at that time at the Hague, at Vienna, and in London, gives the most curious and detailed account of the efforts made by Louis XIV. to break up the coalition. Lionne was dead, and the King himself carried on the correspondence with his

ambassadors. The greater part of their despatches are preserved in the memoirs of the time, or in the public archives: they prove that Louis XIV, though intoxicated by success, had considerable clearness of intellect, and that, along with the passion for military glory, he had a certain aptitude for a cold and crafty diplomacy; he made use of small means, and he appealed to the lowest passions; so that his diplomacy, whilst it was keen and skilful, was not always marked by a kingly spirit. The letters of Colbert de Croissy and of the Marquis de Ruvigny, the ambassadors in London, exhibit the active steps which they took to maintain the alliance between Louis and Charles, and to gain over friends to the French alliance among the politicians of that day; they describe too, at the same time, the difficulties which these manœuvres encountered, and the necessity under which they laboured of resting satisfied with but doubtful success among subordinate people. French diplomacy, which failed in preventing the marriage of William of Orange to the King's niece, had two objects in view, between which it occasionally vacillated. Its first aim was to induce Charles personally and openly to favour the Catholics; and its next object was to detach the Government and the Houses of Parliament from Holland and from the Continental League. Charles II, as is well known, died a convert to the Catholic faith; but until that time there was no reason to believe that he had more than a preference for Catholicism.

Between Charles I, who died a Protestant, and James II, whose Catholicism was openly avowed, the Catholicism of Charles II. appears hesitating, doubtful, and tardy. One difficulty which weighed on his government, was felt equally in the next reign, and later still in that of William of Orange—the difficulty of inducing the House of Commons to vote supplies for carrying on war, more especially a war in concert with France. Charles II. had recourse to a variety of expedients, to avoid summoning Parliament and asking for supplies. His most frequent resource was to accept personal gifts from Louis XIV, or to conclude with that monarch certain financial arrangements, which were only known to one or two confidential advisers. Louis XIV. gave his money freely to meet the prodigal expenses of Charles II.; but when there was a question of increasing the military force of England, Louis doubted whether it were better for him that there should be an English army or not; whether the advantage that Charles might derive from his arms to control public opinion, or to overawe Parliament, was not more than counterbalanced by the danger of seeing that army used sooner or later to reinforce the other enemies of France on the Continent.

Such was the state of affairs between England and France.

In Austria, the Chevalier de Grémonville, an ambassador of consummate ability, who remained in that country many years, did his best by fair words

or threats to detach the Emperor from the coalition. All the resources of his energetic and active mind failed, however, after the commencement of the campaigns in Holland. Grémonville left Vienna the year after hostilities had begun, and, as the war spread, William of Orange acted in concert with Montecuculli. But before this Grémonville had utterly failed in his negotiations with the Emperor for the partition between France and Austria of the dominions of the Spanish monarchy, in anticipation always of the approaching death of the Spanish king, Charles II. The details of this negotiation, assuredly the greatest which the annals of diplomacy can offer, are invested with a romantic and dramatic interest, in a most remarkable historical work on the Spanish succession.[1] Charles II. of Spain was only seven years old when this negotiation took place, and he lived till he was forty.

With regard to Holland, the Memoirs of the Count d'Avaux, who filled the post of ambassador at the Hague, make us acquainted with the state of men's minds there, and with the struggle of the Orange party against what remained of the party of De Witt. They show us the trouble taken by the ambassador of France to support and advance the latter faction, which wished for peace, while at the same time he opposed the Stadtholder and his friends, who desired the continuance of the war. The anxiety of Louis

[1] *Négociations relatives à la Succession d'Espagne sous Louis XIV*, &c., vol. ii. p. 123, &c. By M. Mignet.

XIV. to conclude peace had become intense, long before his desire was accomplished. As he had made many conquests, it was certain that, whatever were the conditions of peace, he would be allowed to retain some important places. D'Avaux displayed marvellous activity; he put himself into personal communication with the members of the Estates, called upon them all at their own houses, and was insinuating and profuse in his compliments and his flatteries, to a degree far beyond what could have been expected from the ambassador of the great King.

The Peace of Nimeguen was at last signed, and by it were secured to Louis XIV. Franche-Comté, and some important places in the Spanish Low Countries on his northern frontier.

III.

This was the culminating point of the reign of Louis XIV. Although the coalition had prevented him from attaining the full object of his designs against the House of Austria, which had been to absorb by conquest so much of the territory belonging to Spain as would secure him against the effect of a will preserving the whole inheritance intact in the family, yet his armies had been constantly successful, and many of his opponents were evidently tired of the struggle. It is true that the

coalition had withstood him, and had held him in check, without having beaten him; yet with the exception of the Prince of Orange, it was anxious to break up. Condé and Turenne were both dead; but Luxembourg had still many laurels to gather, and Colbert had some years to live. The King's language was confident and haughty. The Empire and Spain had bowed the neck in the conferences of Nimeguen. In France the respect that surrounded the throne was profound, and the people had as yet uttered no complaint; no sign was yet visible on the surface; the star of Louis XIV. had not yet lost its brightness.

Some years passed thus, with the appearance of calm. Europe was conquered; and when peace was broken, because, as was said, the Treaty of Nimeguen was not duly executed, the events of the war were for some time neither brilliant nor important, for several campaigns began and ended without any considerable result. During this time the expenditure of Louis XIV. was enormous in every way, and the luxury of his Court was ruinous; whilst the embarrassments of the English Court, then allied with that of France, and the penury of the English crown, were constantly increasing. But no one about Louis XIV. seemed to care, since the protection of the French monarch was thus rendered more indispensable to the House of Stuart.

There was, as it were, a halt in the progress of public affairs.

Then, at the end of this period of a few years, which was, we may say, the dividing ridge between the two halves of the reign, Colbert, the minister of the years of success, died, but no one took up the mantle that fell from the shoulders of this able organizer and reformer, to whose counsels so few had listened. Louvois inherited his importance in the councils of his sovereign, but not his functions or his capacity, and, like all courtiers who were men of ability, he showed himself more capable of meeting the difficulties of to-day than anxious to insure security for the morrow.[1]

[1] *L'Histoire de Louvois*, by M. Camille Rousset (4 vols. in 8vo.), has justly had a considerable success with the public and the literary world. The work is remarkable for the extent and the novelty of its research; for the patient and discriminating examination of the documents, hitherto unknown, belonging to the War Office in Paris; for the force and the truth of its conclusions, and for the excellence of its execution. M. Rousset has by no means exaggerated the merits of Louvois: he is not excessive in his admiration, even after having lived so many years in intimacy and familiarity with him. He gives us a better knowledge and a closer view of the character of the minister who for thirty years guided public affairs in the reign of Louis XIV. But M. Rousset does not pretend to alter the judgment of history in regard to Louvois. In his book, and after a perusal of his voluminous correspondence, Louvois remains very much what he was before. We must recognise this as an additional merit in the author, and praise his unprejudiced mind. When an author devotes himself to so profound a study of the life of a celebrated man, it is difficult to avoid being carried away in some degree by love for the subject. The book of M. Rousset is entirely exempt from this fault. Louvois is shown to us in this narrative, such as we have always known him to be—the laborious, devoted, and rigorous agent of a policy which was dangerous for the King and ruinous to the country; the general results of which he himself did not clearly see. He was able, resolute, and full of invention in all matters of detail; but he lacked foresight, openness, and freedom of speech, in discussing the

In the meantime, the health of the King was altering for the worse; he was prostrated by a painful malady; but above all his spirits were affected, and premature old age was creeping over him.[1] His tastes and habits were no longer the same. The passionate lover of Madame de Montespan became the clandestine husband of an ambitious, grave, and patient woman, who was older than himself.

At length Louis XIV. entered on the second half of his reign, which differed widely from the first.

Thus the prosperity of the monarch had gone on increasing during his youth; it then stopped; and we shall soon see how it began to diminish.

During this second period of more than thirty years, which begins after the Treaty of Nimeguen and lasts till the Peace of Utrecht, events succeed each other in complete logical sequence, so that the reign presents itself as one continuous whole, with a regular movement of ascension and decline.

important resolutions taken in that reign. When we follow him closely in his daily work, he appears a remarkable man; but, when we observe him from a distance, and seize only the general outline of his measures, he appears unworthy of his position and of himself. M. Rousset was not called upon to devote much attention to Colbert; but he marks with care the immense distance between these two men, who have nothing in common, and who do not belong to the same class. The one had a great aptitude for public affairs, and was led by a very ordinary form of ambition, while the other was remarkable for depth of character, and for a serious spirit: he met with a poor reward for his services, for he was anxious as to the future, which he foresaw and dared to foretell. Colbert was in fact too clear-sighted to serve Louis XIV, who thwarted him, and did not share his presentiments of evil.

[1] *Journal de la Santé du roi Louis XIV*, from 1647 to 1711.

Fortune had changed; and when the old errors were once laid bare, there was no man of genius at hand ready to repair or to conceal them: on the contrary, they were aggravated by new faults, the consequences of which were more disastrous, and produced still more terrible disorder in the constitution of the country. Everything deteriorated at the same time—the faculties of men, the luck of the King, and the state of the country. The war was still carried on with success; but the moment came when the spectacle changed. The leading principle of the reign remained the same; it was always the desire to weaken the House of Austria, or to secure an advantageous partition of the Spanish succession. But the Emperor of Germany was protected by the coalition, and the King of Spain, whose death was considered imminent, would not make up his mind to die.

During these years also, the affairs of England were destined to occupy much of the public attention of Europe. The time was shortly to come when the personal friendship of the Stuarts would cease to warrant any sacrifice, and when Louis XIV. would have his confidence in the stability of that dynasty shaken. On the other hand, the influence of Holland, or rather of the man who guided the policy of that country, would soon make itself felt in England, and become still more powerful.

The Stuarts, before their final expulsion, raised for themselves embarrassments and dangers which

were constantly increasing; and the English interests, which they thwarted, became more involved with those of the Continent.

This is the proper place to revert to the remarks which have been made in a former page, on the double nature of the wars and of the events of the seventeenth century; for they are here capable of a new application.

During the first League, when the Prince of Orange was contending against Louis XIV. with the co-operation of the Emperor of Germany, of the King of Spain, and of the Electors on the Rhine, the religious element played only a secondary part in the war. But we shall see this element make its presence more manifest; it will complicate and enlarge the sphere of action, and add to the forces combined in the struggle against France:—it impressed on the wars which fill up the latter part of the life of William III, that peculiar double character which is so marked in those of the beginning of the century, and which appears still more strikingly in those in which England took a part.

Thus the influence of Protestant England made itself more and more felt in the affairs of Europe, in proportion as the government of the Stuarts, from its violence, its unpopularity, and from the opposition offered to it, was approaching its end.

The last Stuarts for some time hesitated between two ideas. One of these was great and simple,

and it consisted in accepting, and acting loyally up to, the constitution—in living on good terms with the Parliament—and, abroad, in forming alliances with those whose interest it was to see England free and powerful, against those who had a contrary interest: it was, in one word, to maintain a policy of defence against the policy of aggression; and it was the more straightforward and the better system of the two.

The other idea consisted in pursuing, but in a milder form, the same course which led Charles I. to the scaffold—in quarrelling with the Parliament, and practically contesting its power of control—but endeavouring to beguile and manage it, by seeking out ability wherever it could be found united with ambition and suppleness of character. It consisted in endeavouring to divide parties, or setting them one against the other, with a view to neutralize their power; leaning all the while on France as the representative of monarchical power; and finally, in conciliating the friendship of Louis XIV, and encouraging the influence which he exercised over England, and English statesmen, and the government itself.

What we have said of the character and mode of thought of Charles II. would suffice to show that he wished not to adopt either the one or the other of these two systems, but to act sometimes on the one, and sometimes on the other; he did not desire to share, while he yielded to them, the reactionary

passions which were at work around his person, and about the restored monarchy, and he had no inclination to break definitively with any party. He endeavoured to reduce, without destroying, the action of the Parliament, and to maintain an alliance with Louis XIV, which would be kept as secret as possible. He was a Catholic, without avowing or showing it, and he thus led, without thinking of the morrow, a daily life of careless pleasure, while he exhausted every available means to obtain money. If, as we may well believe, this was his object, he had the skill to attain it, for he died possessed of the royal authority, according to his conception of it.

James II. was more ambitious, and more violent, than his brother, and so humble a career would not have satisfied him.

James II. is represented, for the most part, under the most odious colours, and in Lord Macaulay's History he is described as a monster of vice and of meanness, hard and implacable in the exercise of power, passionate and yet cowardly, a despot without grandeur, totally devoid of heart in success as well as in danger. May there not be some exaggeration in this sketch of his character, and may not the eminent historian, whose work, from the very first day of its appearance, has enjoyed the greatest popularity, have allowed certain of his judgments to be a little too warmly coloured? It is difficult to keep oneself clear of all strong feeling when a man

has himself been engaged in political strife; and when he describes events having more or less analogy with those which are passing round us.

James II. did not, throughout his reign, like his brother, waver between two systems; but he hesitated before he adopted one of them. The position of the restored Stuarts was sufficiently strong to enable them to run counter, in some measure, to the moral instincts of the country, without compromising the stability of their crown. Notwithstanding the great defects of James's character, and the notorious difference between his religion and that of his subjects; and notwithstanding the opposition raised against him before his accession, which even went the length of a vote in Parliament excluding him from the throne, he still at his accession might flatter himself that he possessed considerable power. All those who were Tory in politics, and who supported the Established Church in religion, were disposed for their part to bear a good deal, and showed the greatest dislike to any new attempt at a Commonwealth. Many writers have held the opinion that James II, by a discreet management of the House of Commons, could still have remained the Catholic sovereign of a Protestant country, and could have kept up a close alliance with the King of France. But this would have required a certain spirit of moderation towards others, and a certain amount of toleration in carrying out the laws on religious matters.

It has been asserted that James II. wavered some time which of the two systems he should adopt—that which might have saved him, or that which cost him his throne; he asked himself whether he should boldly join the coalition against France, or whether he should give free scope to his instincts of despotism, and contrive to remain at peace with France, as a means of crushing the liberties of his country?

This theory admits of argument, and we may believe that James II. had taken into consideration the broader view of his policy in England before he made his choice of acting on the narrower one.

The friendship between Louis XIV. and James II. lasted as long as it could last,—that is to say, from the accession to the death of the latter, and it caused incalculable mischief to both. Before he allied himself with the Stuarts, and during the lifetime of Charles II, Louis XIV, though he came triumphantly out of the struggle with the first coalition, quite understood that in the long run he could not maintain his ground. He fully appreciated the worth and the moral authority of the Prince of Orange; and the Count d'Avaux, as we have already said, condescended to make the most patient efforts to detach him from the Grand Alliance, and bring him within the orbit of France. But his attempts were unsuccessful: and the Prince was not to be shaken. Louis XIV. made him what he himself thought to be tempting offers; for instance, he proposed to him

the sovereignty of Holland, recognised by France. But could it be thought that such a bait as this would induce a man of his stamp to abandon the mission to which he had devoted his whole life?

The alliance of Louis XIV. with the Stuarts did not present the same difficulties. Charles II. was not a man likely to offer any resistance, when temptation assumed the form of ready money: he promised Louis XIV. everything that a man of so fickle and irresolute a character could promise.

James II. was an associate on whom Louis XIV. could place more confidence than he could on his brother, although the engagement which existed between these two monarchs was by no means frank. The French protection, instead of giving James II. the strength which was wanting, had the contrary result; it weakened him, and it may be said that this was done intentionally. Louis, in his policy towards England, had at that time three objects in view: he wished to encourage James in his attempt to govern without a Parliament; to assist him in his struggle with the various shades of Reformers; and to keep him away, as far as possible, from the coalition. He possibly guessed one thing which James II. seems never to have dreamt of — that the progress of parliamentary government would become a material element in the grandeur of England, and that a King of England, when, like Charles I, he endeavoured to become absolute, was in fact lowering his own

value as an European sovereign by destroying the true basis of his power at home.[1] Thus the friendship of Louis XIV, in every point of view, had in it somewhat that was dangerous and perfidious: it kept alive the evil passions of James II.; it made him unpopular by the one fact that the alliance—not with a King of France, but with this particular King of France—was repugnant to the English nation; it weakened him at home and abroad; it aggravated and embittered religious strife in England; and, to sum up all, it did not in the end prevent his expulsion.

On his side too, James II, all whose passions were blind, could not but be a mischievous ally to Louis XIV. It was just as James came to the throne that the persecution of the Huguenots commenced in France; and Louis XIV. may have thought he would find great assistance in a Catholic king of England, and that the union of their two wills would make each of them more powerful. James II, however, imposed heavy sacrifices on France with no corresponding advantage; by his political violence he brought about the Revolution, which overthrew him; he thus paved the way for the misfortunes which awaited Louis XIV. in his

[1] Letter from Lord Conway to the Prince of Orange, March 1681. (*Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau.* Second Series, vol. v. p. 493.) Letter of the Ambassador von Beuningen to the Prince of Orange, Feb. 10, 1682. (*Guillaume III. et Louis XIV.* By the Baron de Grovestins, vol. iv. Appendix, p. 310.)

old age, and caused England to enter permanently into the coalition.

We state, without exaggeration, our opinion of this alliance, and of its results.

We are justified in asserting that, during the three years of his reign, James II. never once received good advice from Louis XIV. The English people, as we have seen, were disposed to show indulgence to their king. The majority in the first Parliament which James summoned received him with kindly courtesy: it was composed chiefly of new members, had nothing in common with the descendants of the Republican party, nor with the soldiers of Cromwell; but represented rather the posterity of the men who, on certain conditions, would have been friends and defenders of Charles I. It required violent measures to drive this majority into opposition to the Court. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to send to gaol the most respectable prelates of the English Church, and alarm the consciences of all men—to abolish the privileges of the Universities—to annul the franchises of the municipal corporations—to repeal the Test Act, which was one of the great supports of the English Church—to place the religion of the country at the mercy of a commission—to send for troops from Ireland to defend the throne, and to entrust the most unlimited judicial power to a man like Jeffreys, a sanguinary savage, a compound at once of monster and buffoon.

We are frequently, and very justly, astonished, when a government is sliding blindly down the slope towards a revolution, to see it served by men of real capacity, who at first object to the extravagance of the system, but are by degrees drawn by a sort of fatality into the abyss. James II. had, as his President of the Council, a man of remarkable intelligence, talents, and activity. But Sunderland followed, and seconded James in all his follies; he conspired with the French Ambassador against the liberties and the honour of the country; he sent to the Tower the members who voted against granting supplies for the army, and he even defended what was called the "Dispensing Power" of the crown—that is to say, the power to infringe the laws of the Church; he became one of the High Commission Court, which had been abolished since Elizabeth's time, but which had been lately re-established by James, being nothing more or less than a High Court of Inquisition.

Sunderland had not shrunk from any one of these measures; but, when he saw the crown tottering, and the most honest and the most peaceful men joining the party of the Revolution, and becoming passive tools in the hands of the more active, he then, without quitting his post, caused words of encouragement to be conveyed to William of Orange. Without a single scruple he betrayed the man whose senseless acts he had seconded and been responsible for, and was swept into the gulf.

Sunderland's character was enterprising and corrupt; he fascinated people by his talents, but he had no conscience; he deserted, before it was utterly lost, the cause which he had served only from ambition and want of sense.[1]

It was not one of the least of James's errors to imagine that he had something to gain from the division of religious parties in England. He had to deal with three great divisions of the English religious world: these were the Catholics, those who supported the Established Church and the bishops, and the Dissenters or Nonconformists, who were divided into Presbyterians, Independents, and Latitudinarians — names which explain correctly enough the nature of their views. James II. had a scheme which, under other circumstances, Charles I. had tried once before, of bringing together the Dissenters and the Catholics, the two parties most alien from each other. He was persuaded that they had a common interest opposed to the Church of England, and that the Dissenters, who felt most strongly in the country, would think their chance of liberty greater if they had to deal with Catholics rather than with the Anglicans. He wished to enrol the sons of all the enemies to the throne,—of the Roundheads and the regicides,—against the descendants of the Cavaliers. In pursuance of this

[1] Sunderland, under Charles II, had voted for the bill which excluded James II. from the throne. (Correspondence between the Duke of York and the Prince of Orange.)

scheme he published his "Declarations for Liberty of Conscience" (1687), from which he expected a marvellous result. He had not the good sense to see that the Dissenters would view this attempt with extreme distrust, and that the toleration which accompanied it would only be, in their eyes, a blind. William of Orange now sent a confidential agent to England, charged to inculcate on the members of the English Church the fact that, in presence of the danger impending over every form of Protestant belief under the government of James, it was their interest to treat for the moment with the Dissenters, reserving to themselves the right hereafter of again separating from them. This idea was in the right direction; and when the revolutionary movement, provoked by James II, became decisive, it was not the approximation, but the actual co-operation of all the different sections of Reformers that imparted much additional force to the blow. The Church party, which was mixed up more or less with the Tories, allowed the revolutionary flood to roll by, without opposing it, when they were persuaded that there was no longer security for any one under the government of James II.

Thus the Second Revolution in England was accomplished. As is usual in great public commotions, when a dynasty is expelled without the constitution of the country being actually changed, it was effected without any reaction, and almost without any excess. The substitution of one sove-

reign for another was not even preceded by a conflict. The party of the dethroned monarch rallied round him at the last hour, but they did not defend him; for they wished to abridge the crisis so as to avoid the evident necessity of desertion. On the last day the enthusiasm was general, and the supporters of the Crown, who were numerous, and the party in favour of a king who would abide by the constitution and the Church, laid down their arms, and allowed a government hostile to the constitution to fall to the ground without so much as holding out a hand to help it. The Bishop of London showed great energy, and by signing one of the documents which contributed greatly to the change, he gave to the event its due colour and importance.

To the very last, the King was obstinately blind. The nation almost hustled him out of the palace of his forefathers; whilst, by a species of contradiction amounting almost to infatuation, although he thought he was powerful, he made no attempt to defend himself. He never asked the royal troops if he could depend upon their services. William of Orange, Louis XIV, the Dutch, the French, and the English of every shade of opinion, saw the storm that was coming. The blot in the policy of James had been clearly seen by Louis XIV, who warned his ally, offered to assist him, and gave notice to all those whom he looked upon as the partisans of France in Holland. James II. un-

graciously thanked Louis for his good intentions, and informed the Dutch attached to the French faction that the King of France was wrong in his surmises.

The character of William of Orange protected him from impatience, which was one of the dangers incidental to his position. The national movement, which impelled him, was such, that it required very great judgment and firmness to read it aright, and in his eyes this movement, violent as it was, still seemed to lack depth: the temper of the English people was passionate rather than resolute, and the country, under the influence of a sort of frenzy, was carried away beyond what it desired itself. William of Orange placed no reliance on it, and feared what was to happen next. This was his first anxiety. Moreover the attitude of the French monarch gave him cause for thought. The operation of a descent on England, which he had to carry out, in order to insure success, required to be executed promptly; he had no time to make such combinations with his allies on the Continent as would secure the safety of the United Provinces against any sudden attack. If the French army advanced towards Holland, William's expedition to England might not only fail, but be prevented. It was not to be supposed that Louis XIV, whose good sense saw the crisis which threatened the throne of James II, would abstain from the defence of his ally, or that he would prefer to renew, as he did, the war in

Germany, and lay waste the Palatinate. The third cause of anxiety on the part of William of Orange was Holland itself: he feared what the Dutch would think of a perilous and costly expedition; and what would be said of it by the old French faction, the merchants, and the clergy. For a long time the Prince kept his projects secret, and he first confided them to the Burgomasters of Amsterdam.[1]

There was no difficulty in finding men for the expedition to England. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes had drawn into every Protestant country a number of refugees ready for an enterprise of such a nature. Marshal Schomberg, who had left France on account of his religion, was a brave officer, and many veterans of Turenne's army had been driven by the persecution into exile, who were sure to prove most valuable auxiliaries, both as soldiers and as Protestants.

The private information of William of Orange, his constant journeys, and his secret correspondence had kept him tolerably well acquainted with the state of affairs in England. His wife, the Princess Mary, was the daughter of James. More devoted to her husband than to her father, she did her best to dispel the anxiety which the former might have felt for family reasons. She assured him that the wishes of the country went with him. William expressed a desire that a certain number of people, eminent for their character and position, should

[1] *Négociations du Comte d'Avaux*, vol. vi. pp. 123, 899.

make a positive appeal to him. It was a letter to this effect written to him, and signed by seven men of eminence, that finally decided him. His mind, inaccessible to any illusions, constantly warned him that he was playing unaided for a frightful stake; inasmuch as in his own person he was about to plunge England into a revolution, and to dethrone his father-in-law; he knew the English people did not wish again for a Commonwealth; and that without being near at hand, without his connexion with the royal family, and without security, which he alone could give, for the continuance of the monarchy, no revolution would take place. He argued, moreover, that the rising in England, encouraged as it was by the clergy, and provoked by the brutal treatment of the Church, had a religious character, especially in its outward forms. Now, how would the Anglican Church—the Church of Henry VIII. and of Elizabeth—which rejected a Catholic head, accept the ecclesiastical supremacy of a Calvinist? Here were just reasons for apprehension and for scruples; but his religious scruples were not the strongest which he felt, for after all he went to defend the cause of Protestantism. William of Orange professed sincerely the religion in which he had been born; but he belonged to the latitudinarian party; he was disposed to show—as a Calvinist treating with Anglicans, or as a Presbyterian treating with bishops—that species of courtesy which is habitual and easy to men who, without making

their convictions subordinate to their worldly affairs, are nevertheless very zealously occupied with matters other than their religious belief.

As a connexion of the Stuarts, as a neighbour of France, as a Dutch patriot, as a Calvinist and therefore a Dissenter in England, William of Orange had certain grounds of indecision and of doubt, which, however, were one after the other got rid of. His wife, the daughter of the Stuarts, began by making his mind easy in regard to his position as son-in-law of James II. Louis XIV, on his side, began the war in Germany; and was guilty of a new and irredeemable fault while he seemed to forget England and Holland in order to occupy himself with Austria and Turkey. With regard to religious matters, William was persuaded that, while he was the devoted protector of the Protestant cause in Europe, a Dutch Calvinist would not give any serious offence to the Church of England. Lastly, the people of Amsterdam, and the remaining adherents of De Witt's party, gave him to understand that their zeal for liberty in England and for the Reformed faith was stronger than their fear of displeasing the French monarch, who filled their country with Protestant refugees, and who had just prohibited the import of Dutch herrings, together with other articles of commerce, into France, and had thus reduced the maritime population of Holland to idleness. At the last moment the English nation renewed their appeal to the Prince of

Orange, asking him, at the same time, not to bring over more than fifteen thousand men. He brought over an army of fourteen thousand soldiers, composed partly of Dutch, French, and Germans, whose uniform was as varied as their nationality. He took leave of the States-General in a solemn meeting, in which all except himself had tears in their eyes, and he sailed from Helvoetsluys on the 16th Oct., 1688.

IV.

THUS was fulfilled the destiny of a man whose sober and serious qualities, whose cold temperament, whose tenacity of purpose, and whose simple and straightforward good sense assuredly led him further on the path of success than would have done a more imperious will, a more vehement courage, or one of those characters which act on men by appealing to their passions, and seek to control events by their own energy. The head of a small state of recent creation—the general of a republican army, who had seldom been successful—the son-in-law whom James II. had selected with the view to please his future subjects—this man was about, calmly and without emotion, to ascend the throne of England. In undertaking this adventure he manifested neither hurry nor confidence. The troops which accompanied him were far too few to

pretend to measure their strength with the royal forces. He announced himself, therefore, not as a conqueror, but as a negotiator invited to mediate between the King and his people, who had no mission but that of reconciling the Crown with its subjects, and of securing to the English people parliamentary liberty and the Protestant religion. He seemed to think that by announcing in such modest terms so perilous an enterprise, he should, in the event of failure, somewhat break his fall, and mitigate his humiliation.

It is probable that William thought himself pretty sure of success even at the outset of his enterprise. The taking possession caused him less anxiety than the difficulties of the future. Viewed in this light, the words which he addressed to the English, when he presented himself before them, were not altogether false. The feeling he had with regard to the state of England was assuredly one of mistrust, and we, who have the experience of two centuries to guide us, think that his impressions were not altogether free from prejudice. He felt his way with some anxiety; but he had already accomplished too many things in his life, and had advanced too far in his career,—his horizon was too vast, and his object too high and definite,—to allow of his drawing back. A character so determined as his does not easily abandon such a prize. To destroy the dynasty of the Stuarts was, for the cause which he supported, for that of Holland, for

the Protestant religion, and for the independence of Europe, an object beyond all price. This task he performed with all the firmness belonging to his nature; he patiently waited until certain desertions took place which were not immediate, and he put his foot down only when he knew that the ground was firm; he avoided any contest which might engender bitter feeling; but he declared resolutely that he would refuse every title but that of King; that he would neither be Regent, nor the Prince Consort of the Queen. "He preferred," he said, "returning to Holland as Stadtholder, or even as a simple citizen, with the satisfaction of having restored liberty to a great country."[1] He waited till the last of the Stuarts had left London, never to return, before he made his entry into the city.

The first days and the first acts of his reign show that he believed the party of the dethroned family to be more powerful, more deeply rooted, and more closely bound up with the nation, than even the Jacobites themselves held it to be; and that he attributed to a passing impulse the isolation in which James II. found himself at the last moment.

[1] The proclamation of William and Mary, as King and Queen, by the Convention composed of the two Houses of Parliament, did not make the English monarchy an elective monarchy. Anne succeeded to her sister Mary by right of succession. The act of the Convention was equivalent to the exclusion of the Catholic branch of the House of Stuart. Burke has proved, in a dissertation on the legal consequences of the Revolution of 1688, that apart from this exclusion and this exception, the Convention gave its sanction to hereditary right. (Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution.*)

It is probable, had he been asked the question towards the close of his life, he would have honestly confessed his first impressions to have been mistaken, and too much tinged with mistrust.

The Commonwealth had retained but little hold on England; and the power of Cromwell, in the hands of an unworthy successor, had died out of itself. The Republican party, represented by some few religious fanatics rather than by statesmen, had left no issue. During this revolutionary crisis it did not raise its head, and we do not see that it made any serious attempt to prevent the start of the new monarchy. Neither in the House of Lords nor in the House of Commons had it any avowed organ of its own.

As to the other parties, the last two reigns had made in them great changes, or rather great confusion. Those two reigns had been but one struggle —more or less vehement, according to the character of the monarch, but a constant struggle—not so much with the members of the Parliament as with the system itself, and the very principle involved in it. When in trouble, Charles II, as well as James II, had applied to men who were bold, and often violent—who were sometimes men of ability, but devoid of all principle; they were men full of resources for an emergency in an absolute monarchy, but inadmissible and utterly worthless in the government of any free country. What had been the result? Under Charles II, shortly after a bloody revolu-

tion, all political feeling, except at some particular moments of danger and of reaction, had become languid, and, wherever corruption could reach it, it had become corrupt. Under the short administration of James II, political parties, face to face with a brutal despotism, and exposed to persecution and the scaffold, had not been, some supporters and some opponents of the government, but all banded together in a common resistance. So much was this the case, that, in all ranks of society, those whose temperaments were cold and those who were most enduring had in the end lost all patience, and concluded that there was only one thing to be done—to put an end to the present state of things. Whigs and Tories alike, who had been excluded from any part in the government, threatened with the axe of the executioner, insulted in their religious feelings, and interfered with in their families, now found themselves united against the King. The Whigs had outstripped the Tories in pushing matters to a crisis. It was not hard to believe that their dislike to the dynasty of the Stuarts was more profound, and of older date, and that it was likely to be more lasting. The Tories, it was said, if the new form of government displeases them, will forgive the King to-morrow morning, will regret his loss, maintain that he would amend his ways, and declare that he had been more than sufficiently punished.

When we try to explain the state of men's minds during these political and parliamentary contests,

after having been, to a certain degree, benumbed by the corrupting influence of Charles II, we see that political parties had been driven, by the violence of James II, into general opposition. The Catholics did not amount, according to the computation of some writers, to above one hundred thousand in a population of five millions.[1] The great majority of Ireland was Catholic, and remained faithful to James II. for more than a year after he lost England. Scotland had suffered less than England from the excesses of the last reign, and had acquired certain habits of independence in matters of religion and government which William of Orange afterwards had some trouble in dealing with.

This sketch of the condition of England—such as we now are enabled to give of it—does not agree exactly with the idea which the new monarch formed of his kingdom. His first advances were not made to the Whigs, his natural allies, who represented the majority in the Commons, and had never had much to do with the Restoration, whose ranks contained the greatest number of Dissenters, and who were thenceforth the supporters of religious toleration. William of Orange imagined that they could never prefer the Stuarts to him, and that the mere fact of the revolution was for them a sufficient triumph. The Tories, on the contrary, appeared to William to deserve all his attention, because the greater part of the men who had served the restored monarchy

[1] Macaulay, vol. ii. pp. 238, 241.

were to be found in their ranks; and if they were deprived of power, they would soon secretly correspond with the court of St. Germain's, and conspire against him. He thought also that he would have to humour the Anglican party and the High Churchmen, who had been, for the moment, carried away in the revolutionary torrent, but whose hereditary principles in reality attached them to the House of Stuart.

This judgment was open to question. The Tories were divided into two parties, one of which was considerable from its wealth and its power, and would willingly have supported James II. had he shown tolerance and moderation. But the greater number among the Tories had been forced, by his intractable temper, to separate from him; and they had done so after serious consideration, so that they were not likely suddenly again to change their opinions. The others only formed a fraction of a party, to which the name of "Trimmers" was given. These were men devoid of principle, such as, acting only under the influence of ambition, are, in fact, attached to no one, and William could never be sure of them. Nevertheless, from among them he chose his principal instruments of government, and this was not one of the least of the charges brought against him. Halifax, the most eloquent and the most able of the party, and Danby were those whom he first selected. He did not foresee that defections might also occur among the Whigs; and

that the two most illustrious warriors of that day in England—Russell, who gained the sea-fight of La Hogue, and Marlborough, the hero and almost the dictator of the subsequent reign, both of them Whigs—would transfer their personal attachment without changing their party, and without becoming Tories would become Jacobites.

He selected Tories for his first cabinet. In those days a ministry bore no resemblance to what a ministry became in later times; it did not represent the majority of the Houses of Parliament; it did not take upon itself the responsibility of public affairs, nor was it composed of men who were necessarily of the same way of thinking. The Tories governed with the assistance of the members of the opposition; and the first important act, that which sanctioned the accession of the new dynasty—that is to say, the resolution that the throne was vacant, which implied the legal proscription of the dethroned family—was passed by the Whig majority, but contested by the Tories until the very moment when necessity compelled them to consent.

This system of conducting public affairs was by no means easy, and it could not be otherwise. The men who found themselves purposely excluded from office, not on account of personal reasons, but on account of the opinions which they held, thought that neither the King nor the Revolution had kept the promises made to them, and they became malcontents; while the fraction of a party to which

William, by way of precaution and from mistrust, had confided the power, was far from devoted to him. Some of the most eminent members of the clergy protested, and some of the highest prelates, among whom was the Primate himself, refused to take the oath of allegiance. The King was said to be cross, haughty, and silent; his foreign accent, as well as his manners, were a subject of displeasure. It was made matter of reproach, that only his own countrymen, who had crossed the sea with him, were admitted into his intimacy. His health was indifferent; his weak chest prevented him from being able to breathe the air of London, and he did not inhabit the palace in which the last sovereigns had lived. The country, which did not like him, was not to his liking: at the end of a year, the difficulty of conducting the government had so discouraged him that it required some effort to prevent him from quitting England; but his friends pressed him to stay, and he stayed.

Thus the government, which was to make England great, began by being unpopular. Until his arrival in this country, William of Orange had had to contend only with inevitable difficulties, which he had no hand in raising; now for the first time he created difficulties by his own prejudices and by his own faults. He struggled against this trial, one of the most dangerous of all—that in which a strong will is engaged in a false position. There was, in this preference shown to the Tories, something

arbitrary and unjust. After the lapse of two centuries, it is difficult to discover the motive which, immediately after a revolution, could induce him to bring into power those who had been the most opposed to the opinions which had prevailed, and who were most closely allied with those which had succumbed.

The inflexible character of the King, which had done him such good service on other occasions, did not yield. He was slow to admit the principle that parties should have their turn of power. He made no attempt to be affable, or to gain the attachment of his English subjects, but remained a Dutchman in his habits and in his friendships. His second cabinet was again led by a Tory member of the House of Lords, and from 1688 to 1694 William governed the country, for the most part, through men of Tory opinions. This was the result of the prevailing confusion of ideas and convictions, and of a certain relaxation of all the ties which compose the engagements of parties. The new government succeeded to fifty years of revolutionary anarchy and of monarchical instability; it was surrounded by men who had been formed in the disheartening school of a brutal revolution, or in that of a corrupting despotism. The King did not take sufficient account of this state of things, and hesitated to introduce a system more analogous to the spirit of the House of Commons.

These observations are applicable to all the first

part of his reign; although they have not struck with the same force all the English historians. There are some who, from an excessive sympathy for all the consequences of the Revolution, take pains to excuse the hesitation manifested in the King's conduct. In their eyes what he did at the beginning of his reign passes only for a process of feeling his way in the dark, such as is inevitable in every difficult undertaking. But they seem to forget that this tentative process lasted for six years, and that William III. did not reign quite fourteen.

But these difficulties and these errors of the government did not make themselves felt abroad. Altogether, the position of the sovereign was great and strong. Looking at affairs in England only, the Revolution had excited hitherto among politicians some discontent and much indifference; for it had, as it were, refused to the triumphant party their due share of the triumph, and it had given to the nation, as a successor to the exiled king, a prince who was unpopular and a foreigner. But for Europe, in the difficult position in which she then stood, the Revolution was much what an unexpected inheritance is to the failing fortunes of a private individual. The coalition had henceforth a bond of union; and the effects of this change, on the affairs of the Continent, were yet more manifest after the death of William III. than they were during his lifetime. Events so important as these require a long time before they reach their full develop-

ment; and changes so great as these take time in coming into operation: it is afterwards in history that they justly claim a place proportionate to their results. The Stuarts, by following an hypocritical and blind policy at home, and by assuming a subordinate position abroad, had allowed the importance of England to fall away. If William of Orange did not succeed in making himself personally liked, or in making his government at first popular, he did not at any rate allow, as Charles II. had done, a scaffold to be erected under his own eyes for Sidney; nor did he, like James II, fill his prisons with respectable citizens. His policy, if for some time it was unskilful, was at any rate loyal, and under his rule England gained much in the world's esteem.

The second coalition was neither more united nor more firm than the first had been: but, after the expulsion of the Stuarts, the germs of dissolution no longer threatened the same dangers. Its members felt, and were entitled to feel, more at their ease. Spain might show her feebleness and incapacity to give any real assistance; Germany might devote more of her thoughts to Turkey than to European matters, and might delegate to England and Holland as her maritime allies the care of doing her work in Lombardy and in Flanders: but the mischief was no longer the same. The British nation now made itself felt in the balance of Europe, and William of Orange was for the first time in his

life successful in war at the head of his English troops. If the generals of Louis XIV. took Mons, Namur, and Charleroi, in successive campaigns, William subdued Ireland, and won the battle of the Boyne, against an army composed of Irish, French, and Jacobite troops. Thanks to the intrepid genius of Russell, he gained the battle of La Hogue—the most important naval victory of the century—and secured the failure of an expedition which may be looked upon as a vast conspiracy of the French monarch in favour of the Stuarts.

This was the most brilliant epoch of the life of William III. The first time that he revisited the Hague he presided over a general congress, where all the powers of Europe were assembled or represented. The Prince of Orange, who, under the title of Stadtholder of Holland, retained his truest and most flattering name, possessed a moral power—sufficient to allow him, as he thought, to forego the only thing wanting to complete his authority—the personal sympathy of the English nation.

He was now at the height of his glory, after a period of twenty years from his start in life, and his destiny was accomplished; so that until the Treaty of Ryswick, which in 1698 put an end to his hostilities with France, and brought about his recognition as King of England by Louis XIV, not much more was left for him to gain; and he had the skill to lose nothing. Characters such as his weigh with care all their resolutions, seize upon

every lucky chance, and remain deeply impressed with this truth, of universal application—it is more difficult to keep the fruits of Fortune than to win them.

The government, as it lived on, grew stronger and better. In the course of time the domestic policy of England assumed a regular form, and, as far as the conditions of the period permitted it, entered on the path which it has followed in more modern days. Harmony between the Executive and the Houses of Parliament became a rule, professed at least, if not practised; and the King, in all religious questions, did his best to give to all creeds the greatest amount of liberty he could, without shocking the opinion of the most numerous and most compact body. He told the Catholics not to have any anxiety for the future.

With respect to the differences among Reformers, his own idea was to obtain complete toleration for all shades of opinion, and to admit freely and uniformly, to all public employments, the various Protestant sects by establishing on this basis an oath to be administered to all public servants. This system was never completely carried out, and when Parliament did pass a Toleration Act, its terms were confused and contradictory, and the liberty which it afforded was more apparent than real; but the country was not prepared to go further, and the doctrines of the Established Church were too powerful in Parliament, among the moderate men of

the two parties in the State, to allow the wishes of the monarch, though in harmony with his personal convictions, to be triumphant.

In the course of these successful years of William's life, a man of rare ability, but totally devoid of principles—who had been a minister of James II, and who was destined later to serve William III.—who had become a Catholic at the close of the last reign, but had lived retired and unknown since the Revolution—Sunderland—re-appeared suddenly at court. His presence there coincided with a change in the cabinet; and it is supposed that, having had for a long time no interest of his own in the matter, he with his usual good sense counselled the King to form a more regular and solid government, composed of men of known character and decided opinions. William followed this advice, and found among the Whigs men of capacity and of acknowledged political weight, such as Wharton, Somers, and Montague.

It was seen, during this epoch, that the conduct of public affairs was much easier; and that the country did more justice to the good qualities of the King, and recognised in him the honesty of purpose, the great intelligence and the virtues, which were hidden under a disagreeable exterior. The time of Parliament was more than once taken up with Jacobite plots, which had outlived the pacification of Ireland. Some of these trials made a great noise in consequence of the diversity and the rank of the

persons accused, and also because they raised animated debates in Parliament. William, however, found in these plots against him a new element of strength, and, for the moment, they afforded him the means of gaining popularity. Under a government taken from the ranks of the Whigs, the Tories were less ardent in their demonstrations of devotion with reference to the plots against the King's life; but there was a moment when the plotters appeared in so odious a light, that on one occasion only there ensued a violent burst of feeling on the part of the nation in favour of the monarch, which found expression in the form of addresses signed in all the great towns. Some objections were raised in the House of Peers against the wording of one of these addresses, which, in speaking of the power of the monarch, mentioned it as "rightful and lawful." The opposition insisted on these words being changed into, "The right which he held by law to the English crown." The Peers and the House of Commons allowed the address to pass in these modified terms, and attributed the objection to the timidity of some casuists, with an assurance that they would have rejected the amendment had they seen in it a protest on the part of the Jacobites.

Thus these plots had all the weight of political events, and infused some passion into the debates in Parliament; but the King had no cause of anxiety, and gained by the hatred which they raised in the country against their authors. He found no

difficulty in meeting and punishing them, and, in fact, he was so little moved by these matters that, in the conduct of the most grave and delicate affairs, he did not shrink from occasionally employing men who were openly accused of being agents of the Stuarts. It was the fate of this monarch to inspire more confidence in the country at large than devotion among individuals; and to possess sufficient real strength to allow of his intrusting to men of acknowledged ability, but doubtful loyalty, the most important missions. Marlborough, who had not yet reached the highest pinnacle of his glory, more than once offered his services to the exiled King at St. Germain's, who sought, in intrigue, some diversion for the monotony of his life, and some illusion to console his adversity. But Marlborough made it better understood afterwards, that when he plotted against William III, it was not in favour of James II, the dethroned monarch, but for the sake of Anne, James' second daughter, the future Queen of England; and that his object was to hasten her accession to the throne. Louis XIV, who had often thought it advisable, in former days, to pension the necessitous race of the Stuarts, was frequently engaged in the English plots against William III.; but the French gold, which had formerly been so greedily taken by Charles and James, was not found more efficacious in shaking the throne of the new King than it had been in sustaining the fallen dynasty.

V.

When the Peace of Ryswick was made, Louis XIV. had carried on the war for more than thirty years, and during the last part of this period England had joined his enemies. In this struggle France had, for a long time, been successful, owing to the fallen condition of Spain, to the incomplete and doubtful co-operation of the Empire, to the timidity of the Electors who were neighbours of France, and to the irresolution of the other German States. The change which had taken place in England rendered the conditions of the struggle less favourable for Louis XIV. The negotiations for the Treaty of Ryswick were conducted with less ability and boldness, and concluded on less advantageous terms, than the Truce of Ratisbon or the Peace of Nimeguen. Nevertheless, this treaty, which secured to Louis the possession of Strasbourg, might, particularly as age was now creeping on him, have closed his military career without disgrace, if the eternal question, for the solution of which he had made so many sacrifices, and which had always held the foremost place in his thoughts, had not remained as unsettled and as full of difficulty as on the day when he had mounted the throne.

Charles II. of Spain was not dead, and the ques-

death of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria,[1] whom they had selected to succeed to the principal part of the inheritance; the other after the death of that prince. In the first of the treaties of partition, Spain and the Low Countries were to be given to the Prince of Bavaria; in the second, to the Archduke Charles. In both, France obtained Naples and Sicily for the Dauphin.

Both these arrangements—especially the first, which gave the largest portion of the Spanish succession to a third house, and one of secondary importance—suited both France and England as a pacific solution of the question. Louis XIV. preferred seeing on the throne of Spain the heir presumptive to a German electorate, rather than an archduke of Austria. He accepted the Archduke only in the absence of any other candidate.

He would, moreover, have accepted, at that moment, other plans for an arrangement, which he would have rejected absolutely had they been offered him at the commencement of his life; he would willingly have formed the Low Countries into a republic, or have given them to the Queen of Spain, or have divided them.

But events, as we know, deranged all these calculations, and Charles II, who, by continuing to live, had disappointed so much impatient expectation, by his last will provoked a general war, to be carried

[1] Grandson of a sister of the Infanta Maria Theresa, wife of Louis XIV.

on against France by the union of England with the Empire and with Holland—a union which was much strengthened under the new dynasty, and which afterwards embraced the northern states of Germany. William III. did not take part in this war, which was so disastrous in its consequences to Louis XIV.[1]

In England, the events which followed the peace, the intervention of William in the treaties arranging the succession, and the question whether, in time of peace, a standing army was to be kept up, led to the most acrimonious discussions between the King and the Parliament. The same circumstances which had marked the commencement of his reign were reproduced. The two treaties which had been signed by William, were loudly blamed because they had been concluded without the participation of Parliament, and because, while they were advantageous to Austria or to Bavaria, they nevertheless secured to Louis XIV. an increase of territory, and the possession of an important position in the Mediterranean.

William III, therefore, in the last years of his life, had many difficulties and cares. Everything with which he had been reproached, on former occasions, was again brought forward against him.

[1] We shall speak elsewhere of this will; its history and its consequences scarcely concern William III. It must be considered as a great piece of good fortune for the House of Bourbon, which occupied and preserved the throne of Spain; but it was the cause of personal misfortunes to Louis XIV. and of irreparable injury to France.

ıad always, they said, been too fond of war, his ambitious designs had been consulted far e than the interest of the nation. A standing ıy was useless, and, after long and unpleasant ıates, the estimates were reduced accordingly. dispute the necessity of a standing army, and weaken the military position of England, was mply to expose the country to danger; to condemn ıd to discredit the policy and the opinions of the King; and force him to buy peace with France by educing the new monarchy to the submissive and abject attitude of the Stuarts. William resisted as much as he could, and ended by giving way most unwillingly to the wishes of the House of Commons. He was obliged to send away his Dutch guards, the faithful servants of a former time. His frequent trips to Holland were another source of discontent and of public accusations. At length a violent clamour was raised against the distribution of some of the royal domains among certain of his Dutch favourites. His liberality in favour of the friends of his youth was discussed and blamed, and the House of Commons passed a bill to prevent the possibility of its recurrence. William, already suffering from the effects of the malady which eventually killed him, gave to that Act of Parliament an assent which must have wounded the feelings of his heart as much as it did his royal dignity. Such were the bitter events at the close of his life. Public opinion was then very much opposed to him. We

are almost tempted to say, in reading the parliamentary debates of that period, that the services rendered by the King had been altogether forgotten, and that English society saw in him only a morose and haughty foreigner, who had found in England an opportunity of increasing his political fortune and of satisfying his exorbitant ambition, by employing the forces and the resources of the country in a manner which suited and pleased no one but himself. They reproached him with having remained a Dutch Republican rather than becoming in good earnest a King of England—with having neither shown nor yet inspired affection—with being often away—with a passionate love for war, in which, however, he was generally unsuccessful, and they said that his tastes, his temper, his egotism, his many faults, and even his good qualities, were all distasteful to his subjects.

It would be an exaggeration to say that these miserable and humiliating reproaches represented faithfully the sentiments of all Englishmen; or that the spirit of justice was so completely banished from among them that they had formed no other estimate of the man whom history pronounces to have been one of the greatest statesmen of modern times.

William had passed his life in struggling against every kind of obstacle and of misfortune. He had lost, when she was still quite young, his queen, whom he adored, and whom he regretted so deeply

as nearly to have lost his reason by the blow. Perhaps his career might still have ended badly, if thus late in the day his rival in fortune and ambition had not judged it opportune to excite a strong feeling in England, which turned to the advantage of William. At the death of James II, Louis XIV. recognised the son of that prince as King of England, under the name of James III, thus forgetting, or disdaining to observe, the Treaty of Ryswick, by which he had given that title to the Prince of Orange. On this occasion, great excitement was manifested in England. Those who had opposed the necessity of a standing army, and who had refused to vote the necessary funds, took at once quite a contrary view, on seeing the King of France proclaim, in direct contradiction to his word and his signature, a sovereign whom they had repudiated; and even before the War of Succession broke out, they with one accord voted the most generous subsidies.

This exhibition of feeling, consoling as it was to William, marks the end of his career. His reign, which was so great in its events and in its consequences, was as sombre in its aspect as the character and the life of the monarch himself. William endeavoured to obtain, and did obtain, for Holland, England, and Europe, immense results, without ever securing his own happiness: fortune, if we may say so, seconded his efforts without smiling on him. His arms were not triumphant, his name was never

given to Louis XIV, though destined to expiate by so many calamities the successes of his youth, to know completely what misfortune was only after his rival had descended into the grave.

William III. died at the age of fifty-two, on the 9th March, 1702, at the beginning of the War of Succession.

After him, the part he was to have played was divided. Prince Eugene, Marlborough, and Heinsius (the Grand Pensionary) had the conduct of political and especially of military affairs, and acted in concert. The disastrous consequences to France of that war, in which William had no part, are notorious. The battles of Blenheim, of Ramilies, and of Oudenarde brought the allied armies on the soil of France, and placed Louis XIV. on the verge of ruin. Never, however, did that king show a nobler spirit than when adverse fortune had nearly overwhelmed him. The posthumous result, and tardy realization, of the conceptions and labours of William III, are among the most remarkable of the circumstances attending the destiny of one who seemed born to struggle and not to triumph. It seems as if it were more than could be conceded to one individual, both to create and successfully to carry out a policy so vast; and as if the inheritance and fruits of his political schemes were to be divided among three men of genius, whom the opportunity rendered famous.

That which above all defines the historical cha-

racter of the reign of William III. is, that he it was who assigned to England an active part in European politics. From the close of the seventeenth century, England has not always persevered in following the path which William traced out for her; nevertheless, she held that course during the wars at the commencement of the eighteenth century, and she has subsequently come back to the same line of policy. In pursuing this system William led the way. The Stuarts, even if they had been free from all domestic embarrassments, and had governed England so as to satisfy the country, and make themselves popular and powerful, were not men of a type bold and enterprising enough to make the country feel the full measure of its strength. The Tudors had hesitated to take any part in the wars of the sixteenth century; their policy had never been quite in accordance with their religious belief, and they leant towards France or towards Spain, according as victory inclined towards one or the other of those powers. But if no one in England, before William III, had carried out the system, not only of active intervention, but often indeed of taking the initiative in European affairs, he has had the good fortune to find successors in this line of policy. He has taught this country the modern theories of the balance of parties at home, and of the balance of power abroad. It would be to exaggerate his merit and foresight, if we were to add that it is to him that the English of the eighteenth century

are indebted for the conviction that nothing important ought to take place in Europe without their participation, and that their intervention in continental affairs concerned, not only the glory of England, but also its prosperity. It was not to protect and serve the material interests of England that he waged war against Louis XIV. William III. did not indeed foresee the events which would mark the close of the eighteenth century, in a neighbouring country; but by his example, by the results which he obtained, by the enterprises he undertook—the final carrying out of which he left to the representatives of the coalition, who were capable of completing his work—William III. pointed out what the duty of England was when the independence of Europe was menaced. Had the ambition of Charles V. been as short-sighted as that of Louis XIV, and had William III. lived in his time, we should probably have seen formed against Spain a coalition which Francis I. never knew how to form or to organize, even in its most elementary form.

The influence of William III. in England and in Europe was therefore one of the greatest that ever fell to the lot of any one person to exercise. It was not that of an egotist, of an unreasoning and adventurous conqueror, but that of a man profoundly wise and master of his actions—of one who did not look on the policy of his country from a flattering and personal point of view, but who calculated the

useful consequences likely to accrue therefrom, and who paved the way, after his death, for a still wider influence of England than that which he himself exercised.

VI.

HISTORIANS who were merely just to William III. have long been favourable to Louis XIV, by speaking more of his great qualities than of his weaknesses, by giving his name to the century, and by leaving it undecided whether the merit of having produced so many great military, literary, and political geniuses should be attributed to him or to chance.

At the present day the glory of Louis XIV. is on the wane rather than on the increase, and Voltaire admired him more than we do. Historians hesitate; they have acknowledged that the "age of Louis XIV." and the "great King" are not exactly contemporaneous; that Louis XIV. was born after the commencement of the century, and that some of the greatest events took place before the birth of the monarch, who was subsequently called its great representative. Historians have marked with tolerable precision and exactness the respective merits of the most eminent kings of France, who have personally most contributed to change or improve

the condition of their country;—such as Philip Augustus, Charles VII, Louis XI, Henry IV, and Louis XIII. under the guidance of Cardinal Richelieu. But with regard to Louis XIV. they are not so clear. In their judgment, in the judgment even of those who have no desire to depreciate in any degree the prestige which attaches to monarchy, the reputation of Louis XIV. is splendid and yet open to discussion.

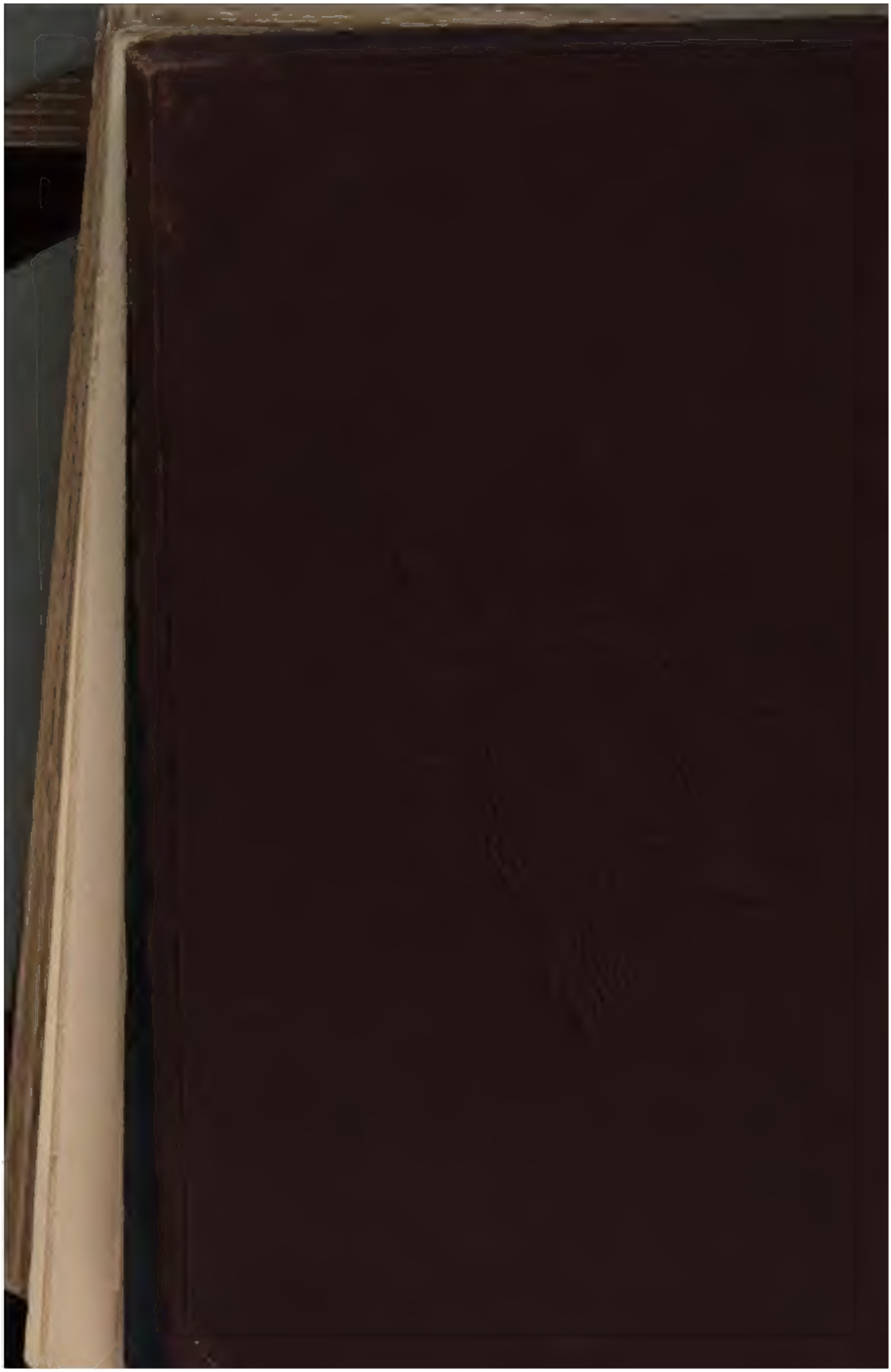
The life of Louis XIV. is constantly the subject of works written without prejudice; the interest never flags, but in every fresh work the tone appears to be colder, more searching, and more exact. The character of the monarch is less imposing in undress; nevertheless, there is no lack of historical writers. The events of the century: its wars, its diplomacy, the state of the finances, the theology, and the metaphysics; the great men of the age—Pascal, Bossuet, Descartes; the learned recluses of Port Royal; Colbert, Louvois; the celebrated women of that time, who occupied the attention of the world by their passion for politics, by their writings, or by their beauty—all these persons and all these subjects continue to interest the highest intellects of the present day.

Everything in the age of Louis XIV. contributes to attract the attention of literary men, and of philosophers, and tends at the same time to induce them to suspend their definitive judgment:—the diversity and the instability of the events that took

place, at one time so brilliant, at another so disastrous; the gravity of the questions under discussion, questions which were not solved then, and which are to this day undecided; the character of the King himself, the variety of his adventures, the profound contradictions which he concealed under the cold and permanent assumption of a formal dignity—a dignity which with him was more than a habit, more than a theatrical artifice or a cloak, but which expressed an imperious condition of his nature.

This is why historians are slow to pronounce a definitive judgment on this period, and above all on Louis XIV. himself. They are anxious to discover whether any documents or any new ideas will have the effect either of reinstating him in the eyes of his detractors, or of discrediting him with those who admire him. They do not yet sufficiently know what they ought to seek under that countenance, always majestic and solemn, which has been handed down to us so correctly by the pencil of Rigaud and the graver of Nanteuil. They are at a loss to know what they will find in a man passionately fond of conquests, steadfast under misfortunes, and of a temper so little warlike; who, having a lively appreciation of the greatness of France, of all her glories, and of all her wealth of genius, forgot the interests of his people with such coldness and egotism. Historians are astonished that an understanding acute, supple, and active,

should be so heedless of consequences and so devoid of true wisdom.

The age of Louis XIV. has therefore remained to this day an interesting point of literary discussion; more profound thinkers than the men of that time never existed; never was an administrator more clear-sighted than Colbert, or an ambassador more able than Lionne; never were schemes more fraught with danger to Europe than those undertaken in the early part of the reign of Louis XIV. Men's minds are filled with doubt by the magnitude of the questions then raised: such as an European war and the balance of power; the impossibility of regulating the finances of a country in a state of chronic war; liberty of conscience; the relation of France to the See of Rome, and all that concerns the amount of independence to be granted the Gallican Church—all these questions weigh, and will for ever weigh, upon society. The King himself—intoxicated with success in his younger days, and depressed in his old age by *ennui*, surfeited with victories which did more to illustrate his reign than to raise his reputation; his good fortune marred by reverses, which did not destroy his natural pride,—presents to us, in the midst of the shortcomings of his policy, and the discordant traits of his character, a figure full of glory, but whose moral worth it is extremely difficult to define.

He committed great faults. To wage war against